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ABSTRACT

Brief, two-page papers are presented on 31 educational topics of interest to community college faculty, administrators, and staff. Each paper is coded to indicate intended audience, subject category, and level of concern. The following topics are considered: (1) preferred learning style and grade achievement: (2) the community college mission: (3) computer-based instructional management: (4) the teacher's impact on the college environment: (5) basic skills self-assessment for beginning students: (6) student recruitment, retention, and attrition: (7) improving student access to support services: (8) selecting learning activities: (9) determining the readability of instructional materials: (10) modifying instruction for students who do not perform well under traditional methods: (11) pedagogical theory: (12) organizing students into small work groups: (13) attitudinal barriers to change: (14) institutional policy for learning: (15) the classroom environment: (16) desirable student behavior in class: (17) computer-based readability analysis: (18) self-concept's relationship to achievement: (19) classroom arrangement: (20) organizational change: (21) a program for older adults: (22) measures of classroom climate: (23) blackboard use: (24) hidden prerequisites for college courses: (25) student passivity: (26) interpersonal communication: (27) migrant education: (28) achieving agreement within an organization: (29) Benjamin Bloom's "alterable variables": (30) changing "The System": and (31) the premises of professional commitment. (JP)

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS.
VOLUME II, NUMBERS 1 -31.

Karen Watkins, Editor

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development
North American Consortium

The University of Texas at Austin
Program in Community College Education
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March, 1981

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      C. Management of Instruction
      D. Personal Effectiveness Skills
      E. Student Skills
      F. Instructional Strategies

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1. Informational
2. Personal
3. Management
4. Consequence
5. Collaboration
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Karen Watkins

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Vol. II, no. 1

PREFERRED LEARNING STYLES & GRADES

INTRODUCTION

When college teachers describe their most successful students, they are likely to use terms such as independent, competitive, internally organized and creative. Yet, recent *research information would suggest that the probability of earning an A grade in college courses increases when students are:

1. Dependent
2. Non-competitive
3. Externally organized
4. Not too creative
5. Prefer listening to reading

RELATIONSHIPS

These analyses confirm nearly linear relationships between preferred style and grade as follows:

1. Students stating preference for Structure-Organization (i.e., logical & systematic courses) were awarded higher grades.
2. Students stating preference for Structure-Detail (i.e., clearly written and specific instructions) were awarded higher grades.
3. Students stating preference for Independence (i.e., working independently and learning alone) were awarded lower grades.
4. Students stating preference for Listening (i.e., lectures, presentations, etc,) were likely to be awarded either A or D grades.
5. Students stating preference for Iconics (i.e., audio-visual, pictures, demonstrations) were likely to be awarded a grade of B.
6. Students stating preference for Inanimates (i.e., equipment, manipulations, etc.) were likely to be awarded a grade of C.
7. Students stating preference for Direct Experience (i.e., real life contact with subject matter) were awarded higher grades.
8. Students expecting to receive a high grade usually were awarded a high grade.
9. Although not significant, C and D students stated higher preferences for Reading than A and B students.

Research studies consistently suggest that students behave about the way we expect. If we teachers structure, organize and direct student learning, students

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*RESEARCH BASE. Recent research involving a random sample of mid-western community college students compared the preferred student learning styles with the grade awarded by community college teachers. The Canfield Learning Style Inventory was used to assess student preferences on seventeen style dimensions. One-way Analysis of Variance produced eight significant style differences (as the independent variable) with respect to grade awarded (as the dependent variable). Scheffe Analysis was used to identify the style-grade interactions.

usually respond by fitting their behavior into our structure, organization and direction.

Teacher observations confirm that students usually want their teachers to exert most of the effort in planning and delivering instruction. They want teachers to make learning easy, to test the superficial and to award grade and credit based on minimal student effort.

MESSAGE TO COLLEGE TEACHERS

This research contains a sobering message for most college teachers. Apparently student preferences are shaped by class and laboratory behavior of college teachers.

If college teachers want their students to grow in independence, independence must be rewarded. Likewise students will grow in creativity, ability to organize, reading, etc. in response to their teachers' expectations and reward by grade and credit. College teachers would do well to expect their students to perform as independent learners, using the library, laboratory and community as resources. In doing so college students are likely to be emancipated from dependency on teachers. Perhaps college students can emulate the model we teachers really wish to display, that is, the ability to function as independent, creative, productive, self-directed learners--scholars.

Walter E. Hunter, Associate Professor
Higher & Adult Education, University of Missouri-Columbia

For Further Information:

Hunter, Walter E. "Relationships Between Learning Styles, Grades & Student Ratings of Instruction," Council North Central Community Colleges, Research Report.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, no. 2

IN SEARCH OF MISSION

At the American Association for Community and Junior Colleges, we are on a search for a description of Community College Mission. We are asking, "What are we willing to go to the barricades for?" For a variety of reasons many of us want to know more specifically what the tasks of our institutions are and what they ought to be.

Beyond any doubt community colleges are changing what they do. Twenty years ago most community colleges saw their role as service agents to recent high school graduates who wanted a year or two of post-secondary schooling in the local community before taking a job or going on to the university. Now the majority of students have already assumed responsibilities of job and family life. Many are part-time. Many are wanting programs or services that do not fit neatly the arrangement of semesters and credits. A good deal of the work such students complete is not provided in a campus setting but under contract to business, industry, and governmental agencies. Courses may be taken through radio, television, and newspapers. Learning activities may be offered in nursing homes and condominiums, recreation centers and correctional institutions. A hundred examples could be given of differences between the community college of 1980 and the college of 1965.

But what of the college through this decade of the 80's? Seldom has there been so much discussion in state capitols and in the institutions themselves about services colleges should provide and, of course, who should pay for these services. At AACJC we have been seeking a sense of mission. In essence, we have been asking what our institutions should be about during the next ten years. We have questioned hundreds of policymakers, educational practitioners, and community people in a number of states about what the community college should be doing.

When we pressed for a sense of priorities, a number of responses came: that we should work more closely with business and industry, prepare ourselves to work with older adults, face the increasing need for remediation because of required competency tests in the secondary schools, learn to work in partnership with other community agencies, focus on training students for the technologies and let community service programs be dictated by the community supporting the institution. We were told that as educators we needed to be more self-directed, more innovative, that we needed to be missionaries, to learn how to serve more people with fewer FTE's.

The major issue seems to be whether we can deal with diversity. How much diversity can be accommodated depends to a great extent on what that college is to do. Our colleges represent the community at learning not the groves of academe. They are more a process than a place. The learners are the same people we meet in shops and offices and plants. Can such diversity be accommodated?

On the surface there are a few compelling threads of broad agreement with which to pull these diverse strands together, but none seemingly strong enough to suggest that this or that will be the community college mission. THE THOUGHT BEGINS TO TAKE FORM THAT PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IS NOT REALLY WHAT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS TO DO, BUT WHAT IT IS TO BE. Clearly change in our society is so rapid that what is required today may be only an option tomorrow or may even be forgotten. The communities that are now the context for community college operations are vastly different and the pace of change in them is uneven. The kind of resources available in community learning systems will also be different. A statement of

mission for institutions that can cover such a variegated field must be general and not specific. It cannot be put in program terms and be useful, that is, not for the community college as a whole.

I want to suggest that of basic and prior importance to the concept of mission--what the institution will DO--is a description of what the institution will BE.

"For the first time in history," writes Edgar Faure, "education is now engaged in preparing men for a type of society which does not yet exist." He urges that we, "no longer assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life," that we "learn to be." Just as the individual needs education to "become himself," just so institutions with this aim require similar characteristics themselves. What they will do cannot now be precisely stated. Instead, institutions must look to qualities of "BEING."

In our search for mission these qualities have already been postulated. They have emerged out of a melange of discussion, observation, and reflection. They do not describe what the institution is to do. They are not a mission statement, but they could well be considered as requisite elements for a community college capable of formulating a viable mission statement. They occur with pronounced frequency in community colleges usually judged to be superior.

1. The college is adaptable. It is capable of change in response to new conditions and demands, or circumstances.
2. The college operates with a continuing awareness of its community.
3. The college has continuing relationships with the learner.
4. The college extends opportunity to the unserved.
5. The college attracts persons broadly diverse in background.
6. The college has a nexus function in the community's learning system.

Concerns about institutional mission are understandable. Change is often unsettling. Perceived competitors vie for territory we have occupied. New voices tell us what to do. We are held accountable for developments that appear to be outside our control. And the conventional methods of projecting future developments are not working. We and those who appropriate funds for the institutions would undoubtedly find it a decided relief, we imagine, to have a clean, precise, and specific description of what institutions are to do. But that cannot be done on a national level, perhaps not on a state level. And for an individual institution it must be a continuing process, not a description formalized once and for all. What can be sought at national and state levels are conditions that allow institutions to be capable of determining suitable actions within broad policy guidelines. Perhaps we will find that searching for a sense of mission is more important in our process of becoming than finding one.

Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., President
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges

For further information
Write Dr. Gleazer at One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 410, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, no. 3 Response System with Variable Prescriptions (RSVP): (A Computer-based Instructional Management System)

The increasing diversity of student populations in institutions of higher learning is creating a ripe environment for the use of computer technology to individualize instruction. The Response System with Variable Prescriptions (RSVP) is one form of computer-based instruction that has been developed and successfully implemented at Miami-Dade Community College since 1970.*

RSVP can be used for individualizing instruction and advisement. In instruction, it can be used for any course taught in any setting, such as on-campus classes, self-paced laboratories, or remote-learning circumstances. It has the capacity to handle up to 15,000 students in a single course or program. It does not present any restrictions in the selection of curricular materials, course objectives, teaching methods, and instructional support materials. However, RSVP does require the faculty to plan their courses and carry out the necessary programming in advance.

In the RSVP system of instruction, students receive personal feedback in print form, (RSVP letters) which are generated by the computer. The feedback is based on students' answers to multiple-choice questions, students' characteristics, and/or students' entry level performance (reading ability, writing skill, etc). Faculty select and combine the elements to individualize instruction. The basic questions that need to be answered by the faculty in assuming this responsibility are:

- What differences among my students have impact on how they learn?
- What kinds of activities should be provided based on these differences?
- When and how should students' progress be assessed?
- What feedback should be given to students based on their progress?

APPLICATIONS

Countless applications of RSVP have emerged since 1970 and these may be classified into five groups according to their similarities.

Test Feedback

One group of faculty presents curricular materials as independent units or modules. Students complete a unit and check their understanding by answering some multiple-choice questions. When the responses are processed through RSVP, each student receives a personalized RSVP letter that contains a prescription (or feedback statement) for the questions the student has missed.

Giving Personal Assignments

In a second instructional application, reading faculty feed information about their students--reading levels, age, ethnicity, and preference for learning mode--- into RSVP, which in turn selects an appropriate reading assignment from a bank of 3,000 individual

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*The educational aspects of RSVP are applicable to any institutional environment. However, in its present configuration, RSVP operates in an IBM 360/370 computer with an OS operational system. Plans are being considered for increasing the transportability of RSVP to other computer environments.

assignments stored in the system.

Diagnosis & Prescription

A third group places students in their most preferred learning-style track in a basic skills math program, monitors their progress through twelve sequential modules, and provides appropriate prescriptions as further help.

Analyzing Errors

The fourth, and perhaps most exciting, application pertains to writing. Faculty read their students' essays and request prescriptive feedback at any one of four levels of writing--primary, basic, intermediate, and superior. They can process any number of written assignments per student. Based on designs determined by the faculty, RSVP selects the appropriate individualized sets of feedback and presents them in the form of a letter to each student. At the primary level, RSVP analyses the faculty requests for patterns of error observed in the students' written assignments and provides prescriptive feedback that addresses a unified, integrated problem in writing such as a need to work on eliminating run-on sentences or other similar basic sentence errors. An added advantage in using RSVP for writing is that the system accumulates students' errors across several assignments and provides a status report to the faculty.

Monitoring Student Progress and Attendance

Additionally, in the advisement area, RSVP is being used at Miami-Dade Community College for over 35,000 students. It includes faculty evaluation of students' progress and attendance halfway into the term and uses twenty different pieces of information about each student, such as course load, reading level, previous term performance, and native language.

Kamala Anandam, Director
Computer-Based Instructional Development and Research
Miami-Dade Community College

SAMPLE RSVP LETTER

Dear Student:

Thank you for turning in Assignment 2. Below are some comments I'm having you to read to help you see ways to improve your writing. You have presented your ideas in an original way. This creative approach to writing enables you to express your ideas in a fresh manner and should help you to continue writing interesting and distinctive papers. Spelling does not seem to be a problem for you. Congratulations. Your are part of a rare breed. Your narrative writing is effective because you have maintained consistent verb tenses and point of view throughout, and you have used well-chosen details and an appropriate pace to move the action forward.

I'll look forward to seeing your next assignment. Keep writing and writing, because improvement comes only with practice.

Sincerely,
FACULTY MEMBER'S NAME

For Further Information

Several documents have been written on the RSVP system and its various applications and are available upon request to Kamala Anandam.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, No. 4

VULNERABILITY IN COLLEGE TEACHING

Like so many other professions, the profession of teaching is continuously changing as new ideas and technologies are discovered. Kaoru Yamamoto suggests that this change requires a constant reexamination of ourselves and three key aspects of teaching: the matter, the manner, and the mask. He offers us a new theoretical construct--a way to see how our current practices are often inconsistent and leave us feeling ill-equipped to effectively meet all the new demands placed on us in college teaching and how we can find solutions when our frustration levels are high or our energy levels are low. In each category he identifies the central problem and offers several solutions.

The Matter

How we conceive of college teaching can make us feel either more vulnerable or more effective. Energy draining ways that faculty may conceive of teaching are: 1) disassociated--Teachers teach and learners learn. This view sees teaching as a lonely activity, one which demands considerable strength on the part of both the teacher and the learner. 2) dispensatory--("the vending machine model"). The problem with this view is that the teacher may run out of information or feel depleted. Again, the teacher is isolated, for communication is only one way. 3) short term--concerned with fostering only observable immediate changes. Such a view lacks continuity, does not consider a student's total program and defines the matter of teaching too narrowly.

Yamamoto instead encourages faculty to conceive of learning as (1) an exchange --Faculty and students are adults with much to share. Teachers will feel less isolated and depleted if learning involves interaction. (2) an encounter--Faculty and students are then willing to respond to each other as they are. As a result, faculty members will adjust in their presentations to student feedback becoming more responsive in the process. (3) developmental--Faculty and students will be able to take the "long view" of the learning transaction and eliminate some of the immediate frustration teachers feel when students do not seem to be learning at predetermined rates.

The Manner

The teaching environment may lock us in and make us feel less in control of our results. Consider, for instance, the constraints implicit in a standardized time frame for courses; rooms with rigid furniture arrangements; and the over-reliance on verbal communication. If we ignore the need for flexibility and spontaneity in learning and make the teacher the only one with responsibility for giving instruction, college teaching may become too stultifying, too burdensome, and too tiring.

Yamamoto advocates putting more responsibility for learning on students. Students working on their own are not inhibited by space or class bells. Students helping each other learn can take some of the pressure off teachers. He suggests that ludic or playful experiences encourage students to consider both apparent and hidden possibilities, to figure things out for themselves, or to wrestle with their own feelings. Changing the method of college teaching in these ways may make teaching less taxing and more pleasant.

The University of Texas at Austin
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The Mask

Regardless of the emphasis on communication in teaching, it is not likely that teachers and students reveal much of themselves to each other. Frequently, teachers are hesitant to disclose themselves freely or to interact in more than a superficial way. Perhaps they are afraid they will look silly, be rejected or misunderstood, and lose authority rather than seeming friendly or helpful.

Unfortunately historical influences which shaped American higher education have aggravated this feeling in teachers. From the English, we inherited a tradition of the intellectual and moral nurturance of the elite. From the Scottish, the notion of advanced instruction of the general public in practical subjects; and from the German universities, the notion of empirical research conducted by specialists. What has happened in America is a blend of the three. The institutional mission may be from the Scottish, the ideal conduct of the teacher from the British, yet evaluation and promotion criteria come from the German tradition! It is a rare teacher who possesses all of these skills. Most of us try to juggle the roles of tutor, craftsperson, and investigator. As a result, faculty do not have a clear image of what is meant by "college teacher."

An inevitable result of this situation is a nagging feeling of sham. When one justifies his/her capabilities as a teacher on the basis of additional qualifications, teaching itself may be demeaned. And so, we often express doubts to each other in private--doubts which undermine the critical sense of efficacy teachers must have. Some respond to this sense of vulnerability by demanding extremely high performance from students; others may spend most of their time on non-teaching duties such as research, consultation or administration.

Yamamoto suggests that if teachers are able to remove the mask in teaching, it will be because colleges have recognized that discovery and teaching are not only different functions but also different gifts. With the exception of research of the highest quality, teaching and research should be rewarded equally. In the meantime individual teachers must strive for continued learning and growth and present themselves as authentically as possible. Yamamoto's view of effective college teaching is of teachers who conceive of teaching and learning as a complex process deserving of full professional energy, requiring constant fine tuning and sensitivity to the "other".

The special appeal of Yamamoto's notion of vulnerability is that he shows compassion for the difficulties involved in college teaching while he also invites us to view task from a different perspective to see if we can regain greater control over our teaching situation and become more effective in the process.

Ms. Karen Watkins
Editor, Innovation Abstracts

For further information see

Yamamoto, Kaoru. "Vulnerability in College Teaching", Proceedings of the 4th Annual Conference on Higher Education. Published by the College of Education, Texas Technological University, October 1977, pp. 41-56.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, no. 5 A SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR BEGINNING COLLEGE STUDENTS

Educators dealing with high-risk students have long pondered the quandary of student placement. Obviously, students deficient in basic or requisite academic skills need remediation if they are to have a reasonable opportunity for success in college, but effective voluntary placement is not always easy. El Centro Community College has developed and refined a self-assessment package for new students that is an effective, innovative way of directing students to place themselves in appropriate courses as they begin college.

Developed by Associate Dean of Students, Gwen Hall Rippey and counselors, Wilton Fowler and Jim Horton at El Centro College, the process is designed to make the initial assessment as non-threatening as possible, to encourage students to begin college in a self-directed way, and to avoid the ugly specter of arm-twisting and the waste of incorrect placement. The self-assessment is based on the theory that a student will honestly diagnose many of his own weaknesses and choose the developmental coursework he needs if given the opportunity. The new self-assessment program was also designed (1) to improve the climate for growth of students, (2) to assist students in selecting classes whose content more clearly matched their ability and skill development, and (3) to aid faculty teaching freshman classes by reducing the number of students in their classes who lacked the basic skills to succeed. Specifically, the program is designed to include the following elements:

1. The opportunity for students to meet counselors, peer counselors, and other new students in a relaxed environment designed to reduce tensions and test anxiety.
2. Self-ratings which measure a student's self-concept in the areas of likes and dislikes, perceived abilities, and high school grades.
3. Brief self-scoring test instruments which allow students to assess their skills in reading, language usage, and mathematics. The tests used were:
   - Nelson-Denny Reading Comprehensive Test
   - SCAT Verbal
   - Writing Sample designed by the Communication and Developmental Studies Divisions
   - Mathematics test designed by the Mathematics and Developmental Studies Divisons
4. A career interest inventory which provided students insight into their work values, personality traits, interests and abilities in both avocational and vocational areas. This was the only portion of the self-assessment that required the student to visit a counselor at a later time for interpretation of the instrument.
5. A simple profile where both self-rating scores and academic test scores are integrated and are shown to predict success in various classes. In other words, students are invited to interpret the meaning of their scores in terms of probabilities projected from past student performance.

The focus for these elements is a "Self-Assessment and Course Selection" brochure which is distributed to each student and provides a handy record-keeping device. The brochure is divided into six parts. In the first four the student indicates ability in three categories--reading, language and math.

The first self-rating panel is titled "Likes and Dislikes." Questions designed to measure reading interest include: "I like to read short stories/novels"; "I enjoy visiting the library." Language questions include: "I enjoy writing poems, letters, or stories"; "I would like to help organize a creative writing club." The math questions begin: "I enjoy playing number games"; "I like working mathematical puzzles or riddles." As the student finishes each set of questions, she quickly tallies the number of yes and no responses.

The next self-rating panel is titled "Abilities." Here, using the same three divisions, questions are designed to measure academic proficiencies. For example, "I have no difficulty remembering what I read"; "I can recognize the parts of a sentence"; "I always know when I am given the correct change." Again yes and no responses are tallied. The third panel, a natural continuation of the second, is titled "High School Grades" and asks the student to review quickly for himself his own academic history in courses that stress reading, language use, and math. The format, "I made a B or better in the courses listed below" again allows for yes and no responses and makes it possible for the student to continue his count.

The fourth panel, "Personal Assessment Summary," asks her to total all yes answers in each category. Then a handy rating chart enables her to see in quick form (1) her own assessment of her skills; (2) her test scores; (3) and recommendations for what courses she should take based on these two measures. The fifth panel provides handy guidelines the student can use as she begins to make career decisions, choose a major, and select useful coursework, even if she has not yet declared a major. The sixth and final panel is for data summary.

During the whole of the assessment process, students who have been divided into small groups of about twenty each, are assisted by one counselor and one peer student counselor. It is only after they have developed a good working rapport in their small group environment that they complete the two-hour process of taking and scoring reading, math, and language skills tests and complete their self-assessment. At the end of this process, as their last activity, the students register. The majority, some 80 percent, follow recommended course selection guidelines based on past student performance, although they are not required to do so. The value of the process becomes apparent to most. Basically students are first invited to see what they can logically expect of themselves as they begin college, and then they are given a viable alternative for developing skills they do not possess.

El Centro evaluates its program to be a success, based on evidence provided by students in written feedback, by successful student self-placement in developmental studies courses, and by a much improved attrition rate in the freshman class. In addition, faculty morale is improved since so much of the wasted use of time and resources resulting from poor placement has been eliminated. Such self-assessment designs are beginning to be used at a number of colleges in the nation. If the process is carefully tailored to suit the needs of a particular campus setting, effective self-placement can be a natural outgrowth of the self-assessment process. Perhaps El Centro's design will offer your college a useful model.

Dr. Gwen Hall Rippey, Executive Dean, Rio Grande Campus of Austin Community College, Austin, Texas

Dr. Donald Rippey, Professor, Educational Administration, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

For further information write
Wilton Fowler, Counseling Department, El Centro College, Dallas, Texas 75202.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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The Recruitment, Retention, and Attrition Project at Jefferson Community College

Declining enrollments and their subsequent negative effects are one example of a serious problem currently plaguing most institutions of higher education. Many have already dealt with the whirlpool effects of budget cuts, program reductions, faculty layoffs, low morale, and ultimate chaos. Stop-gap measures have been instituted to promote colleges including advertising campaigns, mailouts, and personal recruiting. Some have worked; others have been dismal failures. But it has seemed that our best efforts have not diminished the "Chicken Little"--the sky is falling--syndrome. Our intentions may have been pure; our hearts were in the right place, and the Supreme Being, we were sure, was on our side. But we lacked an ORGANIZATION, an underlying PRINCIPLE and a POINT OF VIEW!

Robert Benchley, the philosopher, journalist, and Supreme Court Justice, described a situation he faced in his last course at Harvard Law School. The only question on his final examination in International Law, for which he admittedly had not prepared, asked him to discuss the territorial fishing dispute between the U.S. and England from the point of view of each country. His answer began something like this: "Sir, I regret to inform you that I know very little about this question from the point of view of the U.S. Furthermore, sir, I know even less about the problem from the English point of view. However, sir, if you would permit me, I would like to discuss the problem from the point of view of the FISH!" Needless to say, Benchley got his "A".

Jefferson Community College has faced and still continues to face a declining enrollment problem. However, rather than continuing to discuss the problem from an administrator's or faculty member's point of view, we began discussing the problem from the point of view of the student. This little used approach provided an opportunity for the college community to address dwindling enrollments, relatively low in-class retention rates, and high attrition rates from semester to semester. What evolved was the RRA Project (Recruitment, Retention, Attrition). Basically, we decided to look at the college from the point of view of the student and, using Benchley, Maslow, and Sheehy as inspirations, identified four distinct phases:

I. PRE-ENROLLMENT PHASE--the time span up to the point at which a person calls or writes the college for information. II. COLLEGE ENROLLMENT PHASE--the time span from first contact, either by letter or telephone with the college to the time s/he walks through the classroom door on the first day of class. III. CLASS ATTENDANCE PHASE--the time span from first class meeting to course completion or withdrawal. IV. POST CLASS PHASE--the time span from course completion or withdrawal to the beginning of the next semester.

Each phase was then examined, researched, strengthened, and expanded. Here are questions we asked ourselves during this process.

I. PRE-ENROLLMENT PHASE

What is the image of the college? Do our public relations efforts reach their

intended targets? How should we organize our recruiting efforts? What impression does a caller form when the switchboard operator answers the telephone? What are some creative approaches to encourage people to visit our campus?

II. CAMPUS ENROLLMENT PHASE

How can our orientation and advising programs be improved? Can we reduce the time and red tape for registration?

III. CLASS ATTENDANCE PHASE

Do faculty adequately explain their policies and procedures to students? Do students understand? Are our classrooms physically conducive to learning? Does our faculty/staff development program focus on needs? Do faculty receive enough data on their students?

IV. POST CLASS PHASE

How can we insure that students will return for the next semester? What are we doing for students on probation or suspension?

The approach described above has provided the college with a unified structure with which to examine each segment of the college in terms of its interrelationship with the other parts. General goals and specific objectives can be established for each operation; responsibilities can be assigned or reassigned; timetables can be set; evaluative criteria can be designed--all in terms of one operation interacting with other operations.

Here are a few of the changes RRA project has initiated at Jefferson.

I. PRE-ENROLLMENT PHASE

A workshop dealing with telephone skills was set up for the classified staff. Recruiting efforts and outreach activities were organized and coordinated. Faculty volunteers established contacts with local high schools on a discipline-to-discipline basis.

II. CAMPUS ENROLLMENT PHASE

The registration process was refined. Students can now register in less than two hours. A thirty-minute orientation program was developed for new students. The advising system was overhauled to better assist undecided students (25% of enrollment).

III. CLASS ATTENDANCE PHASE

The Faculty/Staff Orientation program was redesigned to focus on the teaching/learning process. A handbook of tactics faculty have identified that help retain students was developed and distributed. The Faculty/Staff Development Committee focused its workshops and seminars on needs identified in RRA.

IV. POST CLASS PHASE

The percentage of returning students increased by 4-6%. Special programs were set up by the Counseling Division for students on probation and suspension. Institutional research began a systematic study of potential dropouts.

RRA is not a panacea. It is simply an approach, a principle, a point of view through which an institution can systematically address one of its major problems. The results have been good. In-class attrition (failures and withdrawals) has been cut from 40% to 30%. Robert Heller in his book The Great Executive Dream states, "All good management is the expression of one great idea." The faculty and administrative staff of JCC have managed to express their collective great idea through the RRA principle.

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Karen Watkins, Editor

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WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OUR STUDENTS

You have probably considered many ways to attend to individual needs of students within your classroom. Much has been written about the use of small groups, role-playing, simulation strategies, individual instruction, peer tutors, and other methods which release us from mainly delivering instruction via a lecture mode which prohibits our interacting with students on a one-to-one basis. But what about the times students indicate needs outside our classes? Let's consider the numerous occasions when we have overheard students complain, "I was supposed to go to the library, but I couldn't find it," or "I needed to buy a book at the bookstore, but when I got there, it was closed. Working full time now, I don't have another time to get over there." We have also heard students saying, "I finally got to The Learning Center, but I was too embarrassed to ask anyone for help," or "I didn't know anybody in the media area; so I didn't know which person to see." We classroom instructors can help remove these barriers by acquainting students with resource areas and individuals in our institutions.

Some simple suggestions follow:

(1) During the first week of class, take 15 minutes to distribute a list with current phone and room numbers of key services on campus. Add to this list the names of particular contact persons and a schedule of the availability of these services. In smaller institutions, you may not have a number of these services. Still there are usually individuals whom you know that you might list as contacts for your students needing financial assistance, medical counseling, tutorial help, etc.

(2) When asking students to do research, take the class to the library for a class hour. Spend some time getting students acquainted not only with the catalogs, reference desk and book stacks but also with colleagues who work in the library. Perhaps your librarians offer an orientation on a regular basis. If not, a call a week prior to this visit will help your colleagues prepare to meet your needs.

(3) If a number of your students are having problems with basic skills, consider a trip to The Learning Center (the Math Lab, Reading Lab, Writing Lab). Actually going to the place and making personal contact with the staff will make it easier for our non-traditional students to come back by themselves and feel comfortable doing so. Again, calling ahead for an appointment will alert The Learning Center staff to your needs so that they may accommodate you and your students. With enough advance notice, your colleagues may be able to provide a tailored introduction to their services as it applies to student needs for your course. If English or math faculty are available at certain times for tutoring, you could introduce students to those faculty as well.

(4) When you have many non-traditional learners with basic skill deficiencies in your classes, consider spending 5 minutes a week in class to target the spelling of words or the application of a basic computation skill or grammar rule which relates to your course content and will help your students prepare assignments for your class. Perhaps you and a colleague can agree to offer such basic skills development in both of your classes--just for five minutes a week--to double the dose, as it were. This in-class strategy reinforces students' perceptions of the importance of their continuing to eliminate basic skill deficiencies and of their need to visit various appropriate support services outside of class.

(5) If an in-house field trip to the service persons and centers on campus is not feasible, perhaps you could invite the reading specialist, counselor, librarian and bookstore manager to your class to explain their various functions. So many of our non-traditional students seem to be unwilling to approach people whom they have never met. Seeing a friendly face and becoming even slightly acquainted may make all the difference.

Perhaps your institution has an orientation for students which covers the foregoing; if so, such lists of key personnel and locations as well as specific tours may be repetitious. However, they may also be reinforcing. You will know best which is true for your students.

Let's say that some of these simple strategies help students find the person, place, and service they need at the time most convenient for them. But what do they do when they arrive? Here are a few hints we can pass along to help students get what they need once they have found the person or area:

(1) Students need to be as prepared as possible. Non-traditional students may, especially if they are new to campus life, not realize that they need to have a pen, pencil, social security number, assignment, stamped schedule, etc. to facilitate their getting the assistance they need.

(2) Students, in order to conserve their own energy as well as that of the resource personnel, need to have as clear an idea as possible of what service or help they need. To go to The Learning Center and say "I need help with writing" is far less concrete than "Here is my first theme. My English teacher says I ought to work on the use of commas and semicolons. Can you help me?" By encouraging students to define their needs before seeking help and to jot these down for ready reference, we can save them time and perhaps reduce some of their frustration.

(3) Students who are trying to obtain signed, stamped or initialed approval, accomplish the next step in obtaining financial aid, or collect appropriate forms for any number of reasons often try to do so during the ten-minute break between classes. Suggest that they write down in legible form what they need, go to the appropriate resource, briefly and concisely explain the need, leave the written request there and make an appointment to continue the process later.

(4) Students who need help on an ongoing basis may need to be encouraged to say "thank you" for such professional assistance. Dropping a note to the teacher or peer tutor who has spent so much time with them, or showing themes or assignments which reflect progress to this helping person may promote even better future service for all students.

Use of these strategies enables us to help students and to involve more of our colleagues which in turn promotes a total institutional commitment to helping students succeed.

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For further information

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Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, no. 8 CHOOSING LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR GREATER IMPACT

Every activity in use in teaching is presumed to have some influence for learning. Yet, activity selection has tended to be a by-product of other interests, rather than the central focus of a concern for design. In an attempt to inventory, describe, and differentiate the various kinds of activities used to design learning, I have identified twenty-six activities which are distinctly different, one from the other. These detailed descriptions of activities provided the basis for developing a scale of estimates of "level of experience impact."

This notion that an activity, by its very nature, has either more or less potential to influence learning of various kinds needs to be considered carefully. First of all, it is important to realize that the concept does not measure effective use of the activity. Obviously, an activity of any kind that is poorly utilized, improperly implemented, disrupted, or corrupted cannot be expected to have a positive influence on learning. However, even when an activity is utilized with reasonable procedures, skillful leadership, and appropriate conditions, only certain types of outcomes are likely to emerge. A lecture, skillfully delivered, is highly unlikely to produce new skills in listeners. A demonstration, if well organized, planned, and presented is likely to have strong impact when the process of comprehending relationships between materials and techniques is crucial to learning. Role-playing is more likely to give one a sense of spontaneous application of skills and knowledge than a writing exercise.

Estimates of Level of Impact

The critical dimension that I refer to as experience impact seems to be one that can be measured for each distinctive activity, making each one more or less appropriate for use in accomplishing objectives of different kinds. Since activities vary widely, it is not surprising that impact levels are also quite different.

Seven elements identified in research literature that I have determined contribute to experience impact are:

1. Senses Involved--Extent of involvement of the various senses called upon.
2. Multiple Interactions--Extent to which communication flow is two-way or three-way or multi-channeled.
3. Controlled Experience--Extent to which the character of the experience is under control or has structure.
4. Focus--Extent to which the experience is given a focus, has unity, and internal consistency.
5. Activeness--Extent to which the experience calls for active responses.
6. Originality--Extent to which ideas are original in content, form, or relationships.
7. Reality--Extent to which realities rather than abstractions are utilized as frames of reference.

A few highly contrasting activities will serve to illustrate how distinct differences in experience impact will appear based on these seven characteristics. Using a 3-point scale a "1" would indicate litte or no impact, a "2" would indicate some impact and a "3" much impact. If you were rating an activity's impact, the highest impact level would be twenty-one while the very lowest would be seven. To illustrate the use of the rating

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scale, consider the following sample ratings for a brainstorming activity:

2 1. Senses Involved--While often a lively activity involving at least one sense extensively, brainstorming does not consistently involve all five senses.

3 2. Multiple Interactions--Since several people are generating ideas together, building on the shared ideas of their classmates, this activity involves multi-channeled communication.

2 3. Controlled Experience--Brainstorming is an activity with specific guidelines which impose structure on the process (not the content) of the activity. Nevertheless, compared to many other activities, brainstorming is a less structured activity.

2 4. Focus--Brainstorming has a purpose, a desired outcome which gives it some unity, though of course it is also an activity designed to encourage divergent thinking.

3 5. Activeness--Active response is the nature of the brainstorming

3 6. Originality--Again, by definition, brainstorming requires original ideas.

2 7. Reality--This dimension will depend on the purpose of brainstorming.

Total experience impact assigned 17

Choosing Appropriate Activities

The principle of variety provides the designer with a trustworthy if not very sophisticated way of approaching the problem of activity selection. When all is said and done, any instructional session is likely to be better with activities of a substantial variety than with activities that are very much alike. For instance, a session with activities which are all of very high impact would be exhausting and not necessarily productive. Unfortunately, the danger in applying this principle lies in selecting only for variety while ignoring the question of appropriateness. Inappropriate activities will not produce results, no matter how diverse. Nevertheless, the ratings remind us of the importance of each of these dimensions in choosing an activity. Furthermore, we can see the advantage of choosing at least one activity of high impact.

Based on observations, I have assigned experience impact ratings to a number of learning activities. A few are listed below.

Activity	Experience Impact
(1) First-hand experience	21
(2) Guided practice	19
(3) Interviewing, problem-solving	15
(4) Interviewing, counseling	17
(5) Micro-teaching	18
(6) Role-playing, spontaneous	16

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For further information

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Vol. II, no. 9 DETERMINING THE READABILITY OF YOUR TEACHING MATERIALS

As we are all aware, more and more students are entering college with poor reading skills. Many students entering community college today read below college level. The average high school graduate reads at the eighth grade level. Despite increased efforts to identify these students and get them into developmental programs, instructors are still faced with the problem of having individuals in their classes who cannot read the textbooks. It is, of course, better to plan for this before a course begins, rather than after several weeks have passed and students are already lagging behind.

Fortunately, there is a simple method* for determining the readability levels of textbooks and other materials that can be employed by classroom teachers with a minimum investment of time and energy and which yields satisfactory results. The technique was developed by Edward Fry of Rutgers University, and it consists of the following steps:

1. Randomly select three one-hundred-word passages from near the beginning, middle and end of the book.
2. Count the total number of sentences in each hundred-word passage (estimating to nearest tenth of a sentence). Average these three numbers.
3. Count the total number of syllables in each hundred-word sample. There is a syllable for each vowel sound; for example: cat (1), blackbird (2), continental (4). Don't be fooled by word size; for example: polio (3), through (1). Endings such as -y, -ed, or -le usually make a syllable; for example: ready (2), bottle (2). Average the total number of syllables for the three samples.
4. Plot on the graph the average number of sentences* per hundred words and the average number of syllables per hundred words. Most plot intersect points fall near the heavy curved line. Perpendicular lines mark off approximate grade level areas.

If we use the first paragraph in this abstract as an example, we find that the first one hundred words end at the first asterisk. There are, estimating to the nearest tenth, 5.2 sentences in that section, and there is a total of 164 syllables. A second 100-word sample comprised of steps 1, 2, and 3, ending with the second asterisk, contains (excluding the numbers and underlined section) 8.3 sentences and 167 syllables. A third sample, the last paragraph of this abstract, has 4.3 sentences and 169 syllables in the first 100 words (ending with the third asterisk). If we average the numbers, we get 5.9 sentences and 167 syllables.

	Sentences per 100 words	Syllables per 100 words
Sample 1	5.2	164
Sample 2	8.3	167
Sample 3	4.3	169
Average	5.9	167

Plotting these averages on the graph we find they fall in column 12 hence, if we had drawn our samples from a college text, the book would be on a twelfth grade

reading level. If great variability is encountered either in sentence length or in the syllable count for the three sections, then you can randomly select several more passages and average them in before plotting. Here the number of sentences in Sample 2, 8.3, is rather high, because it comes from a list of instructions. If we had had more material to work with, we would have avoided this section of the text. You may want to average more samples if such discrepancies occur.

The information gained from the formula, coupled with student scores on a reading test, can provide an instructor with valuable information. A discrepancy of one but no more than two grade levels between the readability level of your materials and a student's reading level probably would be surmountable; that is, the student could keep up with reading assignments. A discrepancy of three or more grade levels would almost guarantee failure. For example, a student who reads on an eighth grade level will have difficulty reading this abstract. The Fry formula allows an instructor to discover potential problems while there is* still time to provide help to students who cannot cope with printed course materials--perhaps through the use of peer tutors in the case of the student who is only a little below level, or through placement in a developmental program for a student who is four grade levels behind.

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Innovation Abstracts

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development
North American Consortium

Vol. II, no. 10

NEW EDUCATION FOR THE NEW STUDENT

Clientele. New Students--those in the lowest third academically--are telling us in a variety of ways that traditional education must be redesigned in an egalitarian era. Research shows that these students drop out of traditional colleges, stop listening to lectures, fail to put forth their best efforts, score low on standarized tests, get low marks for their academic performance, develop "nonacademic" interests and hobbies, fail to develop self-confidence, and are nervous and tense in class. Compared with high achieving students, New Students prefer to learn what others have said rather than engage in intellectual questioning. They are less likely to enjoy intellectual puzzles or the manipulation of ideas and abstractions. They possess a more pragmatic, less questioning, more authoritarian system of values than traditional students. From their behaviors we can conclude that New Students have "quit trying" in traditional classrooms. They have learned that giving the wrong answers is painful, and unlike the achievement-motivated student who will most likely approach a learning situation if the chance for success is 50-50, the New Student will avoid situations in which the outcomes are uncertain, because past experience suggests that failure is likely.

A Strategy. Many of the modifications that have been made to accommodate the New Student are concerned with the structure and forms of college programs rather than the content. Major energies have been directed toward getting New Students into college and keeping them there so that they may earn traditional academic credentials. That is one legitimate approach, but what are some possible alternatives? How can we capitalize on the strengths of New Students instead of always demanding remediation for their weaknesses? What are the areas in which New Students show potential strengths, and how can we develop them to meet the needs of society?

To Change the Content the Student Learns. Years of work on the Dictionary of Occupational Titles has demonstrated that the world's work can be catalogued under three major headings--work with people, work with things, and work with ideas--and society needs people with expertise in each of these areas. We need people who are skillful at interpersonal relationships to work with people as vocational nurses, day-care workers, teachers' aids, social workers, and counselors. We need people to work with things--to manipulate tools and materials--as welders, bricklayers, auto repair persons, laboratory technicians, sculptors and engineers. We need people who like to work with ideas and concepts as newspaper reporters, social researchers, mathematicians, poets, and philosophers.

I propose that we aim for an ultimate goal in which each citizen attains excellence in one sphere and at least minimal competence in the other two. New Students, rather than performing at what might be a mediocre level at best if working with ideas, could have the option of developing expertise in their areas of strength --dealing with human problems and technical problems, both talents that are highly important to society.

To Change the Student's Attitude. To change a failure-threatened student into an achievement-oriented learner involves a fundamental change of attitude. The student

must become eager to test herself, curious about herself, and ready to develop her own competencies and assess her own progress. These students also need practice in learning. The reorientation of attitude comes from the student's knowledge that, through her own effort, she has accomplished a difficult task. It cannot come from telling her she is doing fine when she is not or when she is learning tasks at a level far below her capacity.

Even instructors sometimes show symptoms of the fear-of-failure syndrome. They "just know" their teaching will not help New Students succeed. This happens most often to teachers who have been assigned to teach remedial classes. This problem can be solved to some extent by allowing only volunteers who have faith in New Students as learners to teach these classes. However, instructors who are motivated largely by sympathy and by social concern for past injustices tend to overassist students. These instructors may be even more dangerous than those who no longer try because they deny the opportunity for students to take the real risks that learning involves. In the final analysis, the teacher who cares must have enough teaching skill and enough confidence in the student to create the environment and situations that require the student's best efforts. It is desirable to develop a number of tasks and let the student choose which tasks she will undertake.

A Checklist for Change. It is especially important that learning projects designed for the New Students be models for good learning. Ralph Tyler (1970) describes seven conditions for effective learning summarized and included here to provide a checklist for developing models:

1. Students must have a clear idea of what they are trying to learn, including examples of persons doing what they are expected to do.
2. The students' motivation must be strong enough to impel them to make an initial attempt and then to continue the practice.
3. Students must be helped to focus their efforts on the significant features of the behavior they are trying to master.
4. Students must have ample opportunity for meaningful practice in appropriate situations.
5. Students must be provided with feedback on their performance.
6. Instructors should create a reward system that gives students satisfaction from improved performance.
7. The sequential organization of learning experiences is essential to learning complex and difficult concepts.

Students must learn subject matter, but they must also learn how to advance to increasingly difficult levels involving greater risks of failure. The better the student understands the process of learning, the better he can monitor his own progress. When the student can direct his own learning, he has learned the most important lesson we can teach.

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For further information see

Cross, K. Patricia. Beyond The Open Door. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1971, pp. 155-174.

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Innovation Abstracts

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Building A Theory of Learning

Merlin C. Wittrock, Professor of Educational Psychology at UCLA, tells of Mary, a young elementary school child he observed in a class years ago. When the teacher asked Mary to "pick up the papers" at the conclusion of a class assignment, Dr. Wittrock was first astounded and then pained to see Mary go down on hands and knees and begin to pick up bits of paper from the floor. Her teacher, annoyed at such behavior, especially when an observer was present, quickly called on another student to collect the assignment. Mary had only a literal understanding of being required to clean, "pick up", at home while the teacher was so comfortable with classroom experience that another meaning of her words eluded her. After class when they were quizzed, both Mary and her teacher felt betrayed. Each suspected the other had played some kind of trick designed to embarrass. But from his perspective, Dr. Wittrock chose to analyze Mary's behavior in terms of a crucial element of learning theory: We learn in relation to our own experiences, past and present. We cannot interact with what we do not know. But for learning to occur, interaction is crucial.

According to Dr. Wittrock, practice and positive reinforcement--two valued techniques in pedagogy--have encouraged a passive mind set among students and teachers alike and have discouraged interaction in the classroom. Recent research indicates practice is a beneficial strategy only when the learner actively does something with the information or skill, and positive reinforcement has lasting value only when success is attributed to the student's own efforts, rather than to a lucky guess, or an easy teacher, or inherited traits of parents. It is not just a desired behavior, but the thinking that creates the behavior that is important.

To supplement practice and positive reinforcement, Dr. Wittrock builds a case for Motivation, Attention and Incoding (consigning to long-term memory) as concepts necessary to a teacher's learning theory. He stresses that these concepts are indeed logical, even obvious, but are generally not systematically incorporated in the classroom in the ways that practice and positive reinforcement are.

Motivation. If students will actually try, the effort itself increases the potential for learning. The opposite is true as well. If one believes the effort does not matter, then a kind of atrophy sets in. Suppose you have two students, both unhappy with a "C" grade on an assignment, both given the option to rework their efforts. One takes that option while the other is not willing to try again. You have a dramatic example of motivation as a double-edged sword. Simply the effort--taking up pencil and paper again--will predispose learning in one while the unwillingness to try in the other will endanger her future learning in the course.

Attention. It is important to direct the student's attention so that interaction can occur. For example, a primary value of behavioral objectives is that they direct attention. They show a student what to look for in an assignment or a course. Reading students in experimental groups have doubled retention (1) if paragraph headings are given and (2) students are asked to write summary sentences after

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Program in Community College Education
EDB 348, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712

reading a section. Both approaches direct attention.

Incoding. We remember best

(1) what can be related to the already familiar;
(2) what is made vivid to us;
(3) what we experience.

Dr. Wittrock's research, working primarily with reading improvement in elementary age children, documents techniques that exemplify one or more of these concepts. What his experiments document has interesting implications for teachers in the college classroom.

(1) New vocabulary is taught more quickly if the new words are confronted in familiar stories.
(2) Retention of concepts increases if more familiar words are used to explain the concept.
(3) Vivid verbal imagery increases retention.
(4) The exercise of creating an analogy increases retention.
(5) Summarizing content increases retention.

Application

Dr. Wittrock describes three learning stages for teachers who are interested in developing learning strategies around the concepts he stresses. He suggests kinds of activities teachers may want to use with students in each of these categories.

LEVEL I: The Learner cannot relate to content.

These students have no appropriate experience to help them relate to classroom learning. Level I students may come from very different environments (foreign students), or they may simply never have become familiar with classroom learning patterns.

Such a student needs

1. Attention training--Repeat uniform directions often to prepare the student for content.
2. Pictures--Ask students to describe what they see.
3. Vivid stories--Offer content in narrative.

LEVEL II. The Learner knows how to relate to content but doesn't choose to become involved.

This is the largest group. Students here resemble the proverbial "bump on the log" and do not join classroom activities, even though they have the capacities and understanding needed to participate. Ask such a student to

1. Draw pictures.
2. Create analogies.
3. Think in response to open-ended questions.
4. Answer pre- and post-questions.
5. Construct summary sentences.

LEVEL III: The Learner can and does interact in the learning process.

These are the students we are eager to work with. The danger may be to direct them too much, boring them or squelching creative exchange. Ask this student to

1. Participate in discussion involving not only you but other learners.
2. Work from subtle cues designed to initiate, not direct.
3. Freely explore alternatives the content suggests.

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Associate Director for Information, NISOD

For further information

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Karen Watkins, Editor 26

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Blue

Innovation Abstracts

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development
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Vol. II, no. 12

A STRATEGY FOR FORMING GROUPS

Classroom teachers have long recognized the advantages to be gained from having students work in small groups in and out of the classroom. Small groups, well managed and provided with flexible structures, offer students an opportunity to accept a large share of the responsibility for their own learning. In addition, working in small groups provides peer support and enables the instructor to focus more attention on individuals.

One of the most important steps in the use of small groups is their formation. What follows is one process for forming homogeneous or heterogeneous groups of 4-8 students. The bare-bones process is simple and may be adapted to a variety of students and situations. Thus it can be used to bring together groups for discussion, peer tutoring, brainstorming, problem solving, or any other clearly defined task, regardless of content orientation.

The process begins with a brainstorming exercise. Outside of class I ask students to fill out as completely and as uninhibitedly as they can a questionnaire that asks for information in the following general categories: Personal (age, astrological sign, marital status, children, shoe size) Jobs I Have Had, I Would Like to Have; Music I Like; Things I Do Well; Sports I Play, I Watch; People Who Have Been Important to Me; Where I Live and What I Live For; Things I Have Made; Religion and Why It's Important to Me; Free-time Activities; Places I Have Been; Places I Would Like to Go; Fantasy; If I Could Be Anyone For a Day, I Would Be ___; Money and Why I Want It; How I Have Gotten Around; My Favorite Meal; What I Do at Home; If I Were an Animal, I Would Be a ___.

I provide students with a four-page, fill-in-the-blank questionnaire, and I explain to them that no one else will see what they write on this form and that they will have a chance to edit it for presentation to the class. I encourage them to record as much information as they can.

When students come to class the next day, I give each one a magic marker or two and a 24" x 36" sheet of newsprint that has been divided into a number of large blocks, usually 2 or 3 fewer than there are categories on the brainstorming sheet. I then tell them to transfer whatever information they like from the sheet to the poster, adding new information and illustrations if they like. I encourage a spirit of playfulness in this step. The poster design that I'm currently using, included at the end of this abstract, is only one of many configurations which they might use. I tell students to use the top, horizontal space for their names and to label each box as they fill it in. They usually spread out into the hall and work on the floor.

After 20-25 minutes of work, all of us use masking tape and post our sheets on the walls around the room. We then spend 10-15 minutes milling about reading the posters, adding polite, useful comments when they seem appropriate. Once we have had a chance to consider the posters, everybody stands in front of his or hers so that we can match faces with personalities.

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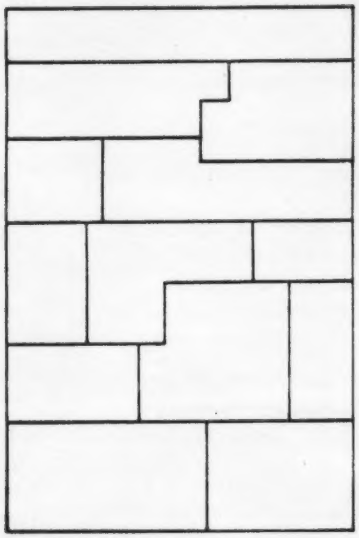
Then, depending on the number of people to be grouped, I tell the whole group how many and what size small groups need to be formed and encourage them to go at it free-style. I usually provide a few ground rules: that no group be all male or all female; that people not necessarily choose to work with their friends; that no group be all older or all younger students. I also encourage people to think about their choices for a minute before the rush to choose overwhelms them, and I let them know how long and in what ways they will be working together. I encourage students to use the information on the posters to help them group themselves with people who have different as well as similar experiences and interests. During the first few minutes of the process, I try to stand back, but toward the end I may help the late-forming groups to organize. The groups then sit around tables and spend the remainder of the class period asking questions and talking about the information on the posters.

The process is adaptable and may be used for a variety of purposes and settings. The information categories might well be narrowed to focus on areas like career goals or cognitive style. The process can be shortened by eliminating the brainstorming step and working directly on the posters, but I have found that the results are significantly less comprehensive and less creative. The process can also be used to re-form groups during the semester. In the re-forming process I focus the categories much more sharply so that students display the interests and learning styles that they have developed thus far.

During the next meeting I spend some time talking with the class about how small groups function. I also distribute a four-page guide published by University Associates (LaJolla, CA, 92037) called "What To Look For In Groups," and we view and discuss a 15-minute video tape of a typical small-group discussion. Throughout the semester I work with individual groups to refine their discussion and group skills. This activity helps me establish a firm base for developing these skills.



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Karen Watkins, Editor

Innovation Abstracts is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $35 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and monthly during summer months. Second-class postage paid at Austin, Texas, ISSN 0199-106X.

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Innovation Abstracts

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AN OBLIQUE APPROACH TO CHANGE

I want to share with you some rather personal thoughts, based on years of experience, about why it is difficult to change. I like to think of myself as an open person. I like to think that I am not just intellectually but viscerally willing to change when adequate need is shown. Still it is difficult for me.

Several years ago I decided it would be good to consciously change a habitual life pattern. I decided to change the sequence of my morning shower, shave and dress routine. It turned out to be a difficult, energy-expending adjustment for me. Not long ago someone suggested that I rearrange my office so my desk would face the window. My immediate gut-level reaction was, "I don't want to do that. I like my office the way it is!"

A Natural Reluctance To Change

Often I lead workshops and work with teachers who are reluctant to think in terms of consciously building a strategy to accomplish change. Furthermore, they are often unwilling to acknowledge that even in small matters change can be difficult. After all, isn't that what education is all about--gradual constructive change? Recently in a Student Motivation workshop I was leading, a faculty group were expressing amazement at their students' inflexible attitudes, their unwillingness to try new things. I asked them if they would be willing to be flexible themselves and try a five minute exercise designed to foster attitude rather than content development. Every member immediately raised his/her hand as a willing participant.

Then I invited the participants to dance. We were in the Student Center where there was a juke box. I dropped in some coins and encouraged all to join in. Three groups formed very quickly. There was a cluster of good dancers who headed for the middle of the floor and were soon energetically dancing. There was a tentative group. They needed to be nudged, but with some encouragement, an invitation, perhaps just a smile, they began to seek out others and dance. A third group "calcified." That's my description of their behavior. They moved to the fringe and were rigid, defensive, soon even visibly angry.

When the record stopped, I asked for feedback, "Did you enjoy that? Would you try dancing to another record? The enthusiastic group offered an unhesitating "yes"; the reluctant group were a little more willing to be coaxed. But the "wallflowers" vented some genuine frustration. After a painful few moments of processing, individuals in this third group began to describe not a whole lifetime but just one bad experience they had had as dancers--one had not been asked to dance at a party; one had stumbled and felt clumsy; one was overweight and felt unattractive dancing. As the pain of those short-lived experiences were discussed, all of us began to feel rather than just understand a crucial concept: people tend to do those things and gravitate to those activities in which they have most skill and confidence, and they tend to stay away from things they don't do very well or haven't tried.

Now I invite you to think of the implications of our dancing episode for students who carry with them the baggage of not one but a whole personal history of failure in school. How do you get such a group to change? You can use force. We really do coerce behavior in our society--on the highway, with a speed limit; in the courts,

with a ruling on a Civil Rights' case; in the military, with a General's command. In education we have sometimes tried to use grades to force change. Recently in some states, legislators have said that "only those teachers who specify their objectives in performance terms will be reimbursed by the state." Quickly behaviors must change--attitudes may not. In fact, it is a rare college environment that will tolerate coercion as the primary motivation to change behavior or practice.

A Human Approach To Change

At any rate I tend to favor a much more oblique and human approach to change. It's slower, requires patience, and has as a real shortcoming that everyone will not respond. But it is an approach that is positive, built on trust, and has the capacity to bring organic, long-lived change. Based on the old agricultural extension model, it features change agents who behave as helpers or facilitators. In the 1920s when agricultural extension services were established in land grant colleges, the idea was to introduce new agricultural research that would affect growth and yield in such a way that farmers would use the research.

Speculating that the farmer was conservative or change resistant, the agricultural agents developed a special strategy. Rather than organizing a meeting at the local high school to discuss the research on new farming methods, an agent went to the local implement company and asked if anybody in town had bought a tractor. Tractors were new. The agent was looking for people who might be receptive to change. Anyone who had bought a tractor should be more open to change. Then the agent would visit Bill Smith, let's say, who had in fact bought the first tractor, help him get acquainted with his new machine, show him ways to better operate the complicated mechanism, and in addition, as part of the helping process, introduce him to hybrid corn. If the hybrid corn was good, over time, over a season or two, the yield per acre would increase, and other neighboring farmers would see results and would hear one of their own describe this success. In essence, the agricultural extension agent found the likely "early adopter" and then became supporter, helper, and facilitator, reinforcing and working with him or her. That early adopter's work not only became a showcase of positive results, but he/she became a missionary, spreading the word about the change. Behind the scenes, the facilitator helped that communication process.

The role of helper is not an easy role to play. But it has the potential to dramatically change an organization over time. I would like to underscore the key elements of this scenario. First, the facilitator gave careful thought to who would offer a willing ear. Then she/he made personal contact with the farmer. Once the seeds were tried and found effective in increasing yields, it was essential for the farmer to share that success and for the facilitator to find subtle ways to help make the results visible --or how would you get others to try the innovation?! I have a favorite expression for people who would make a difference--"Tooteth thine own horn or thy horn will go untooteth." Classroom success, unlike tall hybrid seed corn, occurs behind closed doors. To make change happen, a good facilitator finds ways to open the classroom doors of these star teachers to let others know that these teachers are using a new practice that gets prime yields. By sharing the work of these teachers, facilitators are also sharing an honest reward with the creative faculty members. Such an approach makes change a win-win for everyone--what better way to make the difficult worth doing?

John E. Roueche, Professor and Director
Program in Community College, The University of Texas at Austin

For further information

See Roueche, John E. "The Educational Development Officer: A Focus for Leadership," Toward Educational Development in the Community Junior College. Los Angeles: UCLA, 1972, pp. 17-21.

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North American Consortium

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POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR LIFELONG EDUCATION

A more modern policy framework for lifelong education is needed within the next ten years to help institutions of higher education adjust to the expected radical changes of their programs and services. Described here is a broad policy guideline designed to help institutions determine which efforts will help them provide coherent services for lifelong education in the future. I have been directing this policy exploration for AACJC and would welcome feedback from Abstract readers about the ideas presented here.

RATIONALE. Field work among community colleges tells us that it is important to work more closely with business and industry in order to adapt to rapidly changing technology. It is also important to work for more effective services for older adults. We will be called upon to provide new and more expansive remedial and developmental services for a large number of "new populations" in our colleges. And simultaneous forces of inflation and governmental control will lead us to greater cooperation with community agencies already serving adult learners.

POLICY FRAMEWORK. A policy framework which makes sense for lifelong education in the 1980's could be thought of as one having three separate parts. Part one encompasses the universal and common-core learning needs of adults. These are the learning needs that individuals have in order to be able to fully participate in our society. They go beyond basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, to balancing a checkbook, reading a contract, understanding a product label, and dealing with higher technology like micro-processors and telephone terminals. The rationale for this component is based on moral arguments inherent in the position that free public education needs to provide all its citizenry with skills necessary to function as adults. The Locus of Responsibility would shift from local and state governments toward greater federal responsibility. Court decisions and interpretations of our government have led us to test cases where equal opportunity is ensured by the federal government.

The second part of this policy framework deals with learning needs of an occupational/professional/vocational or technical nature. These are the learning needs which confront individuals if they are to occupy an economic niche within our culture. They are situational and circumstantial learning needs, and they may pertain both to entry level and to maintenance level skill acquisition. We have a complex value system wherein certain skills are rewarded more than others, but work skills are generically similar in that they allow individuals to operate as economic units. The rationale for this component is based on cost and benefits or economic arguments. There are supporting rationales in terms of increasing productivity and human capital investment. The Locus of Responsibility would shift from the federal government toward state and local government. If we look, for example, at the eroding investments in vocational education, CETA, YEDPA, and WIN programs--and compare them with the growth of programs that are cooperative ventures with local businesses and industries--we begin to see a pattern of shifts in loci of responsibility to local areas.

The third part of a framework for lifelong education concerns liberal, cultural and personal learning needs. These needs focus on the desires of individuals to better understand the context in which they live their adult lives. This learning enriches the life of the mind and builds understanding of the human condition. The rationale for this component is based on humanistic arguments. The advancement of mankind has always depended on our understanding of the universe and its processes. Locus of Responsibility would shift from governmental roles to those of specific individuals.

IMPLICATIONS. The above is a basic outline for a policy framework within which institutions might decide their own operating priorities in programs. Let us look for a moment at the implications of such a policy framework.

Foremost of the implications would be the re-streaming of dollars during the 1980's: we may see changes in the total education dollars and in allocations of dollars among student financial aid programs. For example, this framework suggests there would be more dollars to support universal basic skills and less dollars to support liberal arts education. This would be a fundamental policy change.

There would be more programming and federally sponsored research dedicated to adult basic education rather than to occupational and vocational education.

There would be changes in the way vocational education funds are allocated to states and local communities, depending on the level of existing basic skills in a community. Investments in vocational education designed to build on earlier basic skills development would become more cost effective.

There would be a shift in levels of tuition charged for personal learning and social development, together with shifts in the distribution of employee tuition-reimbursement funds.

Taken together these implications foretell the restructuring of our post-secondary institutions. But this policy framework would be continuously adaptable to a fast rate of change. Further, it provides for a continuing relationship with the learner. It maintains equal opportunity as the bedrock of education policy. It provides for serving a widely diverse group of adult learners with varying skill levels, ambitions and "academic" ability.

LIFELONG EDUCATION

	Functional Learning Needs	Occupational Learning Needs	Personal and Cultural Learning Needs
Program Rationale	moral	cost/benefit	humanistic
Locus of Responsibility	federal	state & local employers	individuals
Funding Implications	more federal support for basic skills programs	less programming and federally-sponsored research-- state funds allocated based on community occupational needs	shift in tuition charged; shift in distribution of tuition-reimbursement funds

For further information or to share your feedback contact Jamison Gilder, Director, Policies for Lifelong Education, AACJC, One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 410, Washington, D.C., 20036.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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ISSUES AND ABSTRACTS

We have carried on a mental dialogue with you for almost a year. Now, before the end of our first publication year, we decided to share some of what we have wanted to say to you along the way. We invite your response on any or all of the issues raised here.

Your Concerns

Imagine the chagrin of two female former community college and university English faculty members when they found that two frequent concerns expressed by readers were the use of sexist language and "educationese"! You caught us in a "The president...he" and several generic "he's." On this issue, we emphatically agree with our readers. We just aren't perfect yet. We've responded with everything from "they" (no singular pronouns), alternating paragraphs of "he's" and "she's," "him or her," "s/he" and, frankly, we haven't settled on the one best way. Perhaps you'll give us feedback? Or perhaps we'll continue to use a variety of approaches.

The issue of educational jargon is not as easy to respond to. We have settled on the same basic premise stated originally in our guidelines--we attempt to "dejargonize" (yes--that's jargon) copy as much as possible. By possible we mean that (1) we will not violate the concept of the author. Certain terminology is often necessary for a concept to come through; (2) Using our best professional judgment we may from time to time determine that exposure to a new term or terms is itself an innovation worthy of dissemination in our Abstracts.

The scope of the topics discussed in the Abstracts has been a cause for discussion among our readers. Very specific classroom ideas are popular (e.g. the Cloze test) and more general concept papers (e.g. "In Search of Mission") are also appreciated. Less fondness seems to emerge for techniques that are fairly large scale. We think these broad-based innovations are important; however, they are difficult to condense to two pages. Innovations are often complex because the problems they hope to solve are. Our hope is that when we are condensing a great deal of content we can pique your curiosity sufficiently to encourage you to seek further information. Any ideas you may wish to offer about how we communicate such complex innovations would be appreciated. For example, we have considered running a series on a particular topic. However, as much as possible, we want to continue to make each issue self-contained.

Our Concerns

We've encountered two problems we'd like to share. Several of our college contact persons have described the different ways they distribute the Abstracts, and it seems to us that the overwhelming majority distribute the Abstracts very widely. The number who have purchased extra copies of each issue for general distribution to the faculty confirms this hypothesis. Frankly, we're pleased. Yet the policy question for us becomes, "Do we always want to write for a general audience?" The Abstracts were originally designed to include the possibility of distribution to special groups--e.g. green abstracts for counselors only, gold for administrators, blue for faculty (no pun intended--besides psychologist Luscher and poet Wallace Stevens say blue is the color of imagination), white for special groups (e.g. support staff, Outreach coordinators, developmental studies staff). Our quandary is how we can maintain that immediate contact with so many of you and still provide more specific information to particular groups.

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Program in Community College Education
EDB 348, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712

SPECIAL EDITION

The second concern we've had is that we have not received as many Abstracts from you as we'd prefer. A major intent has always been to help disseminate new ideas that have worked for you. Through our workshops we meet people who are doing excellent things, and we want to share their work through the Abstracts. Perhaps a little encouragement from administrators and staff developers will bring these writers out of the woodwork? Perhaps our format is unclear? Generally we ask that you reflect on two main questions when writing an abstract:

1) What is the innovation? This may be a definition, a description of the components of the program, steps in a process, changes you've made in materials or equipment, roles, values about teaching and learning, the structuring of learning activities, or a rationale for the innovation.

2) How would someone else begin using the innovation? In other words, what are some practical applications of this innovation for other faculty or administrators? Some writers offer practical examples, checklists, step-by-step instructions, or other ways to use the innovation. Some have reported research results and the implications for colleges.

We think our format makes good sense both in terms of sharing widely and in offering practical help but, again, we invite your feedback.

Addenda

Our Abstracts have not been error free. There is genuine pain on our part when we find these lapses. Usually our mistakes are typographical errors, but in one notable instance, such a mistake became a content error. In Kamala Anandam's abstract, "Response System with Variable Prescriptions (RSVP): A Computer-Based Instructional Management System," we goofed when we reproduced a sample RSVP letter. The context made our mistake worse. The letter, a sample of feedback that could be provided a writing student using the RSVP computer system, contained a typo that was also a grammatical mistake. The implications for an instructor are immediate: how can we expect our students to manage writing skills if we can't model that behavior first. The problem was ours--we did not catch the error. We are trying to safeguard against such a recurrence in the future. Our apologies to Dr. Anandam!

Finally, we've had the hard task of rejecting some abstracts. Sometimes we've received more than one on the same topic; at other times we could not reduce the material to abstract form; sometimes we felt the idea was not innovative enough. Every editor faces the dilemma of drawing the line between that which is appropriate for her publication. We have finally settled on the following four criteria: (1) Is the abstract more descriptive than prescriptive (e.g. count the number of "shoulds")? (2) Is the abstract about an idea, practice or technique that is either new, a new start, or particularly timely for our readers? (3) Is it well-written? (4) Does the topic enhance the scope of abstracts already published?

Conclusion

The impetus for this Abstract--and indeed the rationale for the whole series--is our desire to respond to your concerns, to share ours, and, hopefully, to make this series as much yours as ours by encouraging dialogue. We enjoy hearing from you--those who've written abstracts, those of you who have written to share your appreciation, and those of you who've written offering a constructive word for improving the quality and intellectual honesty of our work. Thank you!

Karen Watkins, Editor
Nancy Armes, Associate Director for Information
NISOD

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Innovation Abstracts

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North American Consortium

Vol. II, no. 15

MOVEMENT AND TERRITORY IN THE CLASSROOM

Many teachers are trying to meet the needs of nontraditional students by making their classroom environments less formal, thus creating a better environment for learning. One method teachers have used is to move from the traditional teaching posture behind the lectern to an informal style in which they move freely about the classroom and approach individual students. This can be an effective way to make students feel less intimidated by the learning environment if teachers are aware of a few potential problems.

Quite a bit of attention has been devoted to nonverbal communication and its importance in human relationships. Nonverbal behaviors are important in the classroom also, particularly with high-risk students, who generally "read" teachers very well and who may be from culturally different backgrounds and thus respond in ways different from what the teacher expects. Cultural differences can scramble the nonverbal signals between teachers and students.

A particularly important cultural aspect of nonverbal communication involves space and the instructor's movement within that space. Individuals establish territorial boundaries for various social situations. Most Americans set up boundaries for personal communication that range from three inches to twenty inches. There is a neutral range of from twenty inches to five feet, a public distance of 5½ to eight feet, and a public speaking distance of eight to twenty feet. Most lectures are in the latter two categories, but when a teacher moves among students, other territories become involved. Individuals from cultural backgrounds other than Anglo-American set up different spatial boundaries. Some cultures, for example, require very little personal space and are not at all upset when a stranger approaches within eighteen inches of them, while other cultures require that even relatively close friends remain further than three feet distant in all but the most intimate conversations. In Latin America, for example, the interaction distance is much less than it is for most North Americans. Latin Americans cannot talk comfortably unless they maintain a physical closeness that produces either sexual or hostile feelings in the North American.

The importance of this information for teachers is that students, particularly nontraditional students, become threatened when an authority figure invades their personal or intimate ranges. The threat is intensified when the student is seated and the teacher is standing. If the teacher wants to engage in a private conversation with a seated student--providing feedback on an assignment, for example--the teacher should also be seated so that he or she is not forcing the student to look up. Instructors should be alert for withdrawal behaviors which indicate that a student is uncomfortable, perhaps because the instructor is approaching too closely. These include avoidance of eye contact, a shifting away from the instructor if the student is seated, and backing away if both the student and the instructor are standing. On the other hand, a teacher may seem cold and unfriendly to a student reared in a "close" culture if that teacher backs away when the student invades his "personal" territory, however unintentionally. If a teacher perceives a student as "pushy" and the student feels that the

teacher is trying to avoid him or her, it does not matter much what verbal messages are exchanged.

There are some simple techniques for putting students at ease when approaching them. One is to remain on the student's level, as mentioned above. Instructors also might try sitting in a student desk and letting the student stand. If a student backs away or shifts in his or her seat, back up slightly yourself. Avoid pressing students who are feeling insecure by approaching them too closely.

Patricia F. Archer
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For further information see

Hall, Edward T. The Silent Language, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This issue will be the last weekly issue of Innovation Abstracts for our current academic year. The Abstracts are published weekly throughout the major semesters and once a month during the summer. The next issue will be published in June. KW

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Innovation Abstracts

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Vol. II, no. 16

HOW STUDENTS CAN MOTIVATE TEACHERS

Dear Students:

This is a chain letter. I hope that someone passes this letter on to you so that these ideas can help you as much as they did me.

Most teachers are trying hard to find new and better ways to motivate and teach us, the students. A few, on the other hand, have given up--these are the ones who think that we're not going to learn or at least we don't act as if we will, which makes the classroom a dull, hopeless place--for them as well as for us.

Why not turn this around? Why not help make all of your teachers happy to be alive and vibrant with enthusiasm? You'll benefit! Here's how:

UPON ENTERING THE CLASSROOM:

Look like a student--have visible textbooks, notebooks, pens and pencils. And don't sit too far back in the room.

Be ready to start on time. When the class starts and the instructor arrives, put away the newspaper and end your extracurricular conversations. Get rid of gum, soft drinks, and potato chips.

If you must enter the class late, make an acceptable entrance. At least run a few steps in the hall so you can come in huffing and puffing. Smile in an apologetic way and take the nearest empty seat, quietly. Don't cross right in front of your teacher. Lay low the rest of the period. Try not to repeat the offense.

DURING THE CLASS YOU SHOULD:

Try to keep your eyes fully on the teacher's eyes. When the teacher looks back and establishes eye contact, smile and nod your head. Do it all the time except when taking notes.

At least once during the class, ask the teacher to please repeat point again. When the teacher does this, say, "Thank you, that helps me a lot" (or some similar phrase).

Ask the teacher a question. The question should be about what is being presented. You should then thank the instructor, but if he (or she) is the sort who responds to questions with "What-do-you-think?" make sure you have some answer ready. Don't say, "I asked you first!"

If you know the answers to questions, raise your hand. Teachers love to see those eager responders. If you get called on and really don't know the answer,

be honest and say so. Don't try to be funny about it.

Try to look like you know the answer even when you don't raise your hand. Give the impression that you're allowing the others their chance to score and you don't want to hog all the credit.

If the instructor tells a joke, try to give some kind of a polite laugh or chuckle. Any attempt at levity is a brave effort by the teacher in what may be a grim situation and should be reinforced.

ENDING THE CLASS:

Don't shuffle and start putting away your notebook and pencil while the instructor is still talking.

If the instructor did a good job, give him (or her) a round of applause. You've applauded dull comedians, boring commencement speakers, and amateur rock groups--why not make someone feel good who's much closer to you and is in a position to do something nice for you on every quiz, exam, transcript and letter of recommendation?

When you leave, say something nice to the teacher. If you can't honestly compliment the class presentation just say you're "looking forward to the next class" (and hoping it will be better, but don't say that).

When you've been absent, attempt to make it up. If you were absent from a previous class meeting, ask if you should come by the instructor's office for help on making it up. Never, never smirk and say, "Did I miss anything important?" (You sure did: a chance to be tactful.)

Please note that nowhere in this letter is there anything about studying more or learning more-- that's obvious! The real problem is that we often inadvertently give the impression to our teachers that we don't care about the class or even that we dislike them. That kind of misunderstanding doesn't help anyone.

Just try these methods for a single semester--trust me. Remember if you make just one teacher happy (even if it's for a few magic moments) it will all be worthwhile. Education needs every bit of help it can get--it's up to us, isn't it?

Sincerely,

A Fellow Student

David V. Jenrette
Editor, LIFElines

For further information:
See LIFElines, Faculty Support #103, Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus, 11380 N.W. 27 Avenue, Miami, Florida 33167. (This abstract was reprinted from the above.)

Karen Watkins, Editor

Innovation Abstracts is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $35 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and monthly during summer months. Second-class postage paid at Austin, Texas, ISSN 0199-106X.

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Innovation Abstracts

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development
North American Consortium

Vol. II, no. 17

A COMPUTER-BASED READABILITY ANALYSIS

In 1978, the Program in Community College Education at The University of Texas at Austin was funded by the National Institute of Education to investigate the development of literacy by culturally different students in the community college setting. Early on, two concepts emerged: (1) To gain access to the community college and to survive once admitted, there are definite literacy requirements, some unstated. Students are constantly faced with reading tasks in the form of registration packets, textbooks, and other printed matter. (2) Many community college students are deficient in their basic skills.

Based on some preliminary investigation, NIE staff perceived a possible problem with the reading level of community college material. Research indicates that nationally community college students read at the ninth grade level or below; however, the average readability of the college documents examined was eleventh grade. In order to investigate this disparity further, we proposed making readability analyses of all available material which large numbers of students must negotiate. The problem with this undertaking, however, soon became apparent. Readability analyses were time-consuming to make; there was a great amount of print to consider, and time and staff were limited. Thus it was decided that the ideal scope of work would have to be severely limited. Luckily, the serendipitous discovery of Dr. Charles Watkins' interactive readability analysis for the computer modified this decision.

Watkins' program, written in 1973, simultaneously applies four readability analyses, selected for their adaptability to programming (Flesch, Dale-Chall, Farr-Jenkins-Patterson, and Danielson-Bryan), to text passages which have been typed into a terminal. Now, by computer, two NIE researchers are analyzing materials quickly and thoroughly.

The program, written in FORTRAN for the University's Data Control computers, has a large self-teaching component; that is, it tells the novice user exactly what to do to make the analysis. For example, given the number of pages in the material to be analyzed, the computer program automatically draws a random sample of 10 pages for the user. Specific instructions for typing in text are given by the program as well as information on how to end the analysis. The program provides readability estimates of each sample of text and a summary of results averaged over all the samples.

Using the program to analyze this abstract (through the preceding paragraph), the following output was obtained:

TOTAL WORDS	334	PERCENTAGE DIFFICULT WORDS	47.31
TOTAL SENTENCES	17		
AVERAGE SENTENCE LENGTH (WORDS)	19.65	PERCENTAGE TECHNICAL TERMS	0.00
AVERAGE WORD LENGTH (SYLLABLES)	1.77		
AVERAGE WORD LENGTH (LETTERS)	5.58	PERCENTAGE OF SENTENCES WITH PASSIVE VERBS	58.82

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READABILITY MEASURE	SCORE	GRADED READING LEVEL
FLESCH (READING EASE)	37.39	11
DALE-CHALL	11.59	20*
FARR-JENKINS-PATERSON	27.06	12
DANIELSON-BRYAN	48.41	11

In addition to readability scores, the program supplies a verbal evaluation of the material and makes suggestions as to how the writer might change the text to make it more readable. For this abstract, the computer wrote:

WORDS LONGER THAN TWELVE LETTERS OR FOUR SYLLABLES ARE USUALLY DIFFICULT TO READ. IN THIS PASSAGE THERE WERE 6 SUCH WORDS. SHORTER WORDS IMPROVE READABILITY.

LINE	WORD	LINE	WORD	LINE	WORD
12	INVESTIGATION	23	SERENDIPITOUS	29	ANALYZING
21	TIME-CONSUMING	25	SIMULTANEOUSLY	34	AUTOMATICALLY

SENTENCES OF MORE THAN THIRTY WORDS ARE GENERALLY DIFFICULT READING. IN THIS SELECTION THERE ARE 2 SUCH SENTENCES. SHORT SENTENCES ARE EASIER TO READ.

SENTENCE	WORDS	LAST LINE
1	39	5
12	33	28

SUMMARY: THIS SELECTION IS DIFFICULT, COLLEGE SOPHOMORE.

Having been properly instructed by the computer, the authors are now going back to work to improve the readability of their prose.

Dr. Wayne A. Danielson, Professor, Journalism Department
The University of Texas at Austin

William H. Roberts, Research Associate, N.I.E. Project on Literacy Development
Program in Community College Education
The University of Texas at Austin

For further information:

A sample printout of the program is available on request from Dr. Wayne Danielson, Department of Journalism, the University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712. Inquiries about using the program interactively from remote locations should be addressed to Dr. Charles Warlick, Director, Computation Center, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712.

*The Dale-Chall results in a higher score when the readings material includes technical vocabulary.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Innovation Abstracts

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North American Consortium

Vol. II, no. 18

A TIME FOR HERESY

Perhaps the time has come in the evolution of developmental education for a little heresy. Perhaps we have reached the stage where what has become conventional wisdom should be challenged, where the shibboleths that currently guide our thinking about developmental education need to be revised. I am currently wondering whether or not self-concept is as important to achievement as is believed.

We might ask whether or not the relationship between self-concept and achievement is a chicken and egg question. For instance, we know that people in athletics are very good say, in basketball, yet poor in mathematics. Is self-concept something which is different for different subjects, different moods? Does it change from day to day? What we find is that experts do not always agree on the nature of self-concept, its relationship to achievement, or more importantly on how to improve self-concept. If students go through a program where the only outcome at the end is feeling good about themselves, what we will have are academic failures who feel good about themselves. If you inflate students' egos and neglect their minds, will they feel good about what you've given them five years from now, or will they feel cheated?

Concerns About Self-Concept Development

I'm concerned about how the faculty member knows whether or not a student has a poor self-concept. If the experts cannot agree on a definition of it or an adequate measure of it, how can faculty members determine whether or not students have "poor self-concepts." Furthermore, even if faculty know what students' self-concepts are, what can they do about it? They are not experts in self-concept assessment or in the improvement of self-concept. What they are expert in is instruction--in cognitive, academic instruction. What I find is that those faculty that are most concerned about self-concept development appear to be spending more time in this area than in the cognitive instruction of their students. The result is that we have faculty spending most of their teaching time in an area in which they have the least skill. I wonder too if dealing with this abstraction becomes more important than the function that the abstraction was originally developed to serve--to assist in making teachers more effective in producing student achievement. I'm concerned that a focus on affective development may become a cop-out to some for not doing anything. We say we need to worry about the students' environment, their home lives, and suddenly we realize that we are talking about things over which the faculty member does not have control. Most important, if faculty assume that students will not do well due to a poor self-concept, will they help these students in the same fashion as they would have had they not assumed a poor self-concept? In other words, are we setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy that actually works not to foster improved self-concept but to foster or at least perpetuate a poor image? Teacher evaluation of student potential may not be as important as self-evaluation. I think students can learn a great deal more than we think they can. When I went to school I was considered uneducable, but I never agreed to it.

We need to focus on those things that we can do that would make a difference in assisting students who have basic skills needs. We need to help them overcome their cognitive and academic deficiencies so that they can succeed. I have talked to a

number of counselors at my university and listened as they talked about parenting and motivation and their effect on students, and I have asked, "What about what the student learns?" They have, in turn, replied, "If students don't feel good about themselves, they won't learn." I then replied, "If they haven't learned, they won't feel good." I'm not saying that affective development is not good. I am saying that most of what we've been doing under that rubric has not been producing, from an academic point of view, what it was meant to.

What Should We Do?

Those institutions which are doing the most effective jobs with students are those that are the most traditional, structured, no-nonsense institutions! Although no one would say that community colleges need to go back to traditional formats, there are certain elements that seem to make a difference. We find, for instance, that in traditional institutions the teacher's objectives are clear. The students know their expectations, and there are no "E's for Effort!" The criteria for success are known, and there is a timetable for completion. The total college environment supports instruction, and the focus is on achievement. The student has responsibility for certain things in the learning process and the faculty have responsibility for others (e.g. having a syllabus, posting office hours, making criteria for grades public). In short, the roles are clear.

These, then, are several basic elements to a successful developmental education approach. Two additional elements deserve fuller development.

1) Instruction must be highly structured and derived from basic principles of learning. Let me tell you how I teach students to write. I tell them to put a series of about twelve 8½x11 sheets of paper on the wall and assign each sheet a different topic. Under the 8½x11 sheets I have each put 5x7 cards where they talk about different aspects of the topic they have chosen. They might talk about what the topic is or how it works. In this way I force the student to deal with structure. Only then do I begin to work on content. As a base students need to have instruction that is relatively structured. A beginning soloist needs to stand up straight. When she becomes an accomplished performer, she can lean on the piano.

2) Much of the abstraction needs to be eliminated when we talk to students about what they need to learn. I've often heard it said of graduate students, "These students cannot conceptualize." We're really saying that the student must be able to devise a plan, know the parts, and know how they relate to each other.

So it is a time for heresy, a time to question some of the things that developmental educators now hold most dear. Yet, I think the evidence is mounting. I cannot look at the failure rates and the lack of success of community colleges in helping low achievers succeed without feeling great concern. I believe that a return to a strong academic focus is what we need now to give students the skills they need for upward mobility.

William Moore, Professor
Ohio State University

For further information, see

"Bill Moore Speaks Out," Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education, Vol. 2, No. 1.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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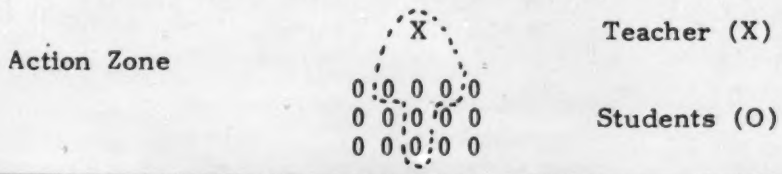
CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENT

Stroll down a school hallway and peer into classrooms. You are most likely to see the teacher standing or sitting at the front of the room, with students in chairs arranged in an orderly pattern of rows and columns. One design authority, Robert Sommer, suggests that the row-column arrangement evolved because of the necessity to use natural light for illumination. But why does this pattern still prevail today? Probably not because teachers experiment with a variety of patterns and find the row-column to be the best, but rather because of tradition. You feel comfortable with it, and you and your students are probably reluctant to leave the security of the known for the uncertainty any new structuring may bring.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Adams and Biddle used hidden cameras and microphones to make videotape recordings of 32 lessons in 16 classrooms. Teachers were equally divided as to sex; half were under 30 years of age and the other half were over 40. While Adams and Biddle were interested primarily in what teachers and students said to one another, we are most concerned with their findings regarding who spoke in the classroom. Obviously, teachers talked--a lot. But which students participated? The videotapes revealed that almost all pupils who made comments sat in the front-center section of the room--an area the investigators called the "action zone." As can be seen in the figure, this area consisted of the three positions lying in a central zone down the center of the room and the two seats at the front on either side of this vertical line. Students in these seats not only make the most comments, they are also the most frequent targets of comments made by the teacher. This pattern was observed in all the classrooms studied, regardless of the subject matter, grade level, teacher's sex or age.

There are at least two explanations of why students in the action zone participate more than students sitting elsewhere. The first suggests that greater visual contact occurs between the teacher and students in the front-center location. Because teachers tend to occupy the center-front of the classroom, it seems quite reasonable that they are best able to see the eyes of students in the action zone, and vice versa. Eye contact seems to both regulate interaction and serve as a stimulus to participate. The second explanation for the existence of the action zone is that students choosing these seats desire more interaction with their teachers than students who sit elsewhere. Research suggests that students who choose to sit in the front of the room are likely to fit the stereotype of the model student: They like school, believe it is important to be bright and get good grades, and want to be considered hard workers by teachers. In contrast, students who choose the back of the room don't like school, are unconcerned about high grades, and tend to be more introverted, expressing a preference for work that allows them to be by themselves.



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The consequences of using such a seating structure include these:

1. Students who sit outside the action zone do not participate much;
2. Interaction between and among students is severely restricted;
3. Teachers will be distant from many students much of the time.

TEACHER PLACEMENT

When the teacher moves about the room, Adams and Biddle described such movements as taking one of three patterns:

The footlight parade covers an area across the front, mainly center-front of the room (68% of time).

The inland excursion consists of a track leading from the center-front of the room, up the middle of the room and back to visit with specific students (8% of time).

The grand tour is a general perambulation around the room and characteristically involves sight seeing only--no visits are made (15% of time).

ALTERNATIVE SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

It appears, then, that with continued use of the row-column arrangement, teachers tend to stake out certain areas of the room (notably, the front-center) just as students claim seats to which they return day after day. Further, in the vast majority of classes studied, students never entered the teacher's zone during the lessons.

To counter such predictability, here are five different seating patterns:

(1) The traditional row-column pattern minimizes interaction between students. Use this arrangement during tests or while completing independent seatwork.

(2) When the activity requires work in small groups, interaction can best be facilitated by pushing desks together so that students can sit face-to-face and talk with one another. This pattern also permits maximum space to exist between groups to minimize distractions.

(3) When making a report to the rest of the class, the members of the reporting group could arrange their desks in the shape of a long table at the front of the room. The audience arranges their chairs in a large horseshoe or semicircle.

(4) For a discussion involving all members of the class, use a hollow rectangle arrangement.

(5) Finally, when you are using a film, slide, or overhead projector, if the chairs are divided into two lines along the sides of the room, leaving a wide aisle in the center, students can alternate between looking at the screen and at you as the activity demands.

In this Abstract we have tried to increase your awareness of the physical environment of the classroom. You should realize, however, that the ultimate effect of the environment depends on how people adapt to it. Many students expect to sit in rows and columns, and, for the most part, be passive. Hence they may be very resistant to changes in the seating arrangement and require time to adjust. You shouldn't expect, for example, that as soon as you put the chairs in a horseshoe pattern, the whole class will suddenly participate in a discussion. After several days of using the pattern, however, some marked changes in participation should be evident.

Ronald E. Bassett
Speech Communications
University of Texas at Austin

Mary-Jeanette Smythe
Speech Communications
University of Missouri, Columbia

For further information see

Adams, R. S., and Biddle, B. J. Realities of Teaching: Explorations with Video Tape, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

Bassett Ronald E. and Mary-Jeanette Smythe. Communication and Instruction New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, no. 20 CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS: TO REFLECT A VISION

The Good News

I am going to be writing about organizational change and how you make it happen. How do you take good ideas on retention and implement them so that they in fact work? The good news is you can make a difference, and the bad news is that you probably won't. So let's take The Good News first. Retention can, in fact, be improved. We do know a lot about what causes attrition. We know the characteristics of the students who drop out. We know the financial aid problems they have. We know that counseling can make a difference. We've got a whole laundry list of things that could, in fact, increase retention--given sufficient time and energy, sufficient commitment, and sufficient money.

Let me tell you a story. For two years I was at Fresno State and had lots of opportunity to do good things for good people. One of the things I wanted to do was to see if I could cut attrition rates. I got really excited about the topic, and I had plenty of resources and plenty of task forces. We were really going to cut attrition until one very wise dean came to me and said, "You don't need all this folderol. It's no big secret how you cut attrition-- you pay attention to students!"

I challenged him to an experiment. He took 100 students and 6 faculty members and put them in a block course program. The six faculty members didn't do anything except work with these 100 freshmen. We used all the classic things that you know make a difference in retention--advising, counseling; the first six weeks we didn't see them merely twice a week, we held their hands while they went to the bathroom! I mean we really took care of these 100 students. Furthermore, since they were block-scheduled and since their faculty were all together on the same project, they did things like take field trips together. Then at the end of the year, we tested the 100 randomly selected students alongside this select group and it worked. We had an attrition rate in the select group of 1% for the year! I was staggered--I wondered if they paid these students! We had an attrition rate of about 50% in the other group.

Now I think there were a whole lot of things going on, one of which was self-selection into the select group, but nevertheless the experiment worked. We also gave them standardized tests in subject matter areas. It turns out that the two groups didn't look much different academically, which suited me just fine since everybody had told me that the select group would look terrible. You know, they were going to love each other but do lousy in math. It didn't turn out that way. Furthermore, when we gave them tests on morale--you guessed it--the select group were pleased with the college, even went out and told other people to enroll; liked instructors; just basically had good experiences. I was so enthusiastic. We had discovered the secret--all we had to do was put money, time and energy into turning the whole place around and setting up these block courses for the entire institution. We never did it.

The Bad News

What I want to talk a little bit about is why it didn't happen. This moves me on to Part II--the bad news. Why did the experiment fail and why are yours also likely to fail? Part II is entitled "You won't make a difference." I'm going to give you five reasons why you're likely to fail. Problem #1. You cannot just go and do it.

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The fact that everybody says they are on the bandwagon fighting to reduce attrition can't hide real conflict that is likely to develop between faculty and administrators, especially student personnel administrators, over this issue. If you are really serious about setting up a program that cuts attrition, it's going to cost money which will be taken out of somebody's hide and given to somebody else. You can count on the fact that this is not going to be easy. Think about the controversy raised by collective bargaining, changes in course load, changes in block courses, changes in scheduling, etc. Problem #2: One of the biggest mistakes that people who try to change organizations make is that they have too many good ideas. It is possible to disperse our energies in so many different directions that we fail everywhere. The rule is this: Stick to a few good ideas. Stick to a few jugular vein decisions. Look around and see if you did one thing--not 152, but one--what it would be and what difference it would make. One of the biggest problems administrators have is focusing--focusing--focusing. Problem #3: You will be tempted to do something different and new when, in fact, what probably needs to be done is something old and tried which needs to be done better. There will be a tendency to want to try to change the organization by coming up with new gimmicks, new strategies, new banners, new slogans, new people. Don't be fooled into thinking that you will get these new exciting ideas implemented. Build a cadre of people who also want to see the change happen. Coopt and work with people whose help you know you are going to need from the beginning--don't fight them; work with them. The key power holders who control the allocation of resources are going to have to be coopted early. Problem #4: Change agents never use realistic time frames. The last thing you want to do is impanel a task force that has carte blanche to go study a problem forever and not do anything. Most of us do not need to study the problem of attrition; we need to get on with doing something about it. Problem #5: You are likely not to follow through. Most of us think we have changed an organization when somebody adopts our effort and starts the process. That's where you start; that's not where you stop. One thing that is clear about most organizational innovators is that having innovated, they stop. Having gone through all the pain and blood and sweat and organization and fighting and political dynamics to get something done, everybody relaxes, sighs a big sigh of relief, goes off and gets a glass of wine. Meanwhile the counterforces come back and take over again. I call this the Issue Carousel. Every issue goes around and around. If you are not watching and you get off the carousel, the people who are still on it will have snatched the issue away on the next turn. I don't like the term decision-making. Decision-making sounds like at some point you made a decision and that's that. I would much rather use the term "decision-flowing" or "decision-pushing" because decisions keep right on going. They don't stop. We think we've changed organizations because we've gotten something to start when in fact the battle won't be won until we have made it keep on going for quite a while.

I believe we know enough about good retention strategies to do it--now. I honestly believe that. In that sense I am optimistic. But when I ask myself--is it likely to happen? The answer is absolutely clear: It's not likely to happen because people are going to make the same mistakes over again. I would not want you to think that success with retention only depends on "nuts and bolts political strategies," or arm twisting. As educators, we need both vision and practicality. we need an LBJ's ability to make things happen and a JFK's ability to articulate a vision. We've got to put the two things together. In reality we are all for retention for some very straightforward, self-interest reasons. Yet only with a vision of what this could mean for students coupled with political tactics--are we going to have a chance of making it happen.

J. Victor Baldridge, Research Sociologist
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Karen Watkins, Editor

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Vol. II, no.21

THE EMERITUS INSTITUTE: OLDER, WISE, STILL LEARNING

Special Characteristics of the Coastline Emeritus Institute

In the fall of 1980, Coastline Community College will offer over 250 classes to nearly 7,000 older adults (Emeriti) through its Emeritus Institute in 45 sites throughout the coastal area of Orange County, California. These classes are unique due to their location, course content, timing, faculty and method of presentation.

LOCATION: Like all classes at Coastline, classes will be offered near the homes of the students --in individual residences, convalescent homes, and retirement centers.

TIMING: Nearly all classes are offered in the daytime and are of short duration--5 to 9 weeks.

COURSE CONTENT: The curriculum is also planned to meet the needs of the students. The courses are designed for retirement age adults and based on interest surveys. Studies are normally not a means to an end but an end in themselves; in other words, a program is designed to offer life enrichment experience rather than preparation for a career. Courses that have been popular include courses related to physical fitness, health and nutrition (one is called "Feeling Good"), traveling (including geography, foreign language, and culture orientation), painting, playing instruments, attending concerts and theater events. One course on Inter-tidal Ecology combines science with fitness as these senior students study marine life by climbing rock formations in the tidal pools.

FACULTY: The faculty has been screened to insure an emphasis on "andragogy" over "pedagogy" i.e.--recognizing that the older student has a lot of knowledge to share and in fact may know more about a given component of a course than the instructor does. Instructors who have been most effective include people who are themselves retired adults and know how to communicate as peers with their Emeritus students and younger people who have become aware of appropriate attitudes and instructional styles by taking courses on aging, some of which are offered at Coastline. Careful screening plus staff development enhance the rapport between the instructor and the mature student. A major component of staff development involves instructors sharing techniques that work with older students.

Approximately 100 of the Emeritus students will be involved this year in learning about older adults. Most of this group will be asked to provide services to other older adults as well as younger professionals who need to understand the aging process. In fact, Coastline, in tandem with the University of California at Irvine, offers a Certificate Program in Gerontology which involves the biology of aging, the psychology of aging, and the sociology of aging in America.

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The Four-Year Experience of the Emeritus Institute

In the period between Spring 1976 and mid-year 1980, the Emeritus Institute has experienced remarkable growth. Although we're not exactly sure what promoted this growth, we do feel that changing the name from "senior citizen program" to the "Emeritus Institute" contributed significantly to tripling our enrollment from about 350 to over 1,000. The term "senior citizen" seems to inhibit many older adults. Shortly thereafter, we established the Emeritus Alliance, an advisory group. The Emeritus Alliance is composed of educators, community leaders, dedicated seniors, and other interested citizens in the community who have given valuable direction to the Emeritus Institute. Each year the Alliance recognizes certain individuals by awarding the "Emeritus Laureate." This award is identified with "Distinguished Service in the Furtherance of Education For and About Older Adults." The advice from the Emeritus Alliance with regard to faculty, curriculum, and learning sites helped us to again triple our clientele, from 1,000 to around 3,000. The following year we doubled again to 6,000 students. This coming year, although we are more involved in ensuring quality than in recruitment, we anticipate a growth rate of about 20%. We believe that a conservative estimate of the number involved in our program will be 10,000 students by 1982. Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of our review of statistical indicators gathered about the program is the extremely high retention rate we have, now running around 80%. Last semester one class started with an initial enrollment of 24 students and had 72 students at the end of the semester!

Another boost to this developing program was our experience with the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology at the University of Southern California which has resulted in an excellent collaborative relationship. Four years ago, our intern from that institution was instrumental in helping us obtain highly qualified instructors for our initial offerings in the gerontology certificate programs, and this relationship still prevails with a number of fine instructors who team up with us in our special courses for service providers.

What We've Learned

One of the purposes of education is to provide all individuals with the capacity to participate in a constantly changing society. Most current education programs are not designed for the particular needs and interests of older adults who are retired or contemplating retirement. These people make up a sizable and rapidly increasing segment of our population. We at Coastline call them the Emeriti. Webster defines emeritus as "worthwhile," but we enrich the meaning further with connotations of "older, wiser and still learning." Our experience probably can be best reflected by our prevailing philosophy drawn from Lawrence K. Frank's significant book, New Goals of Old Age: "We are not making sufficient demands upon older people. What they want is not idleness and freedom, but an opportunity to do something with their lives that will make them significant." It is with these emeriti in mind that we are designing and developing life-long educational opportunities and life-enrichment activities and programs.

Neel Buell, Director
Coastline Emeritus Institute

For further information contact the author at Coastline, 10231 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley, California, 92708.

Karen Watkins, Editor

Innovation Abstracts is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $35 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and monthly during summer months. Second-class postage paid at Austin, Texas, ISSN 0199-106X.

Innovation Abstracts

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MEASURING CLASSROOM CLIMATE TO IMPROVE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Much research has been conducted on how the environment influences individual behavior. Of particular interest to educators is how the classroom environment affects the behavior and performance of students.

We conducted two major studies to construct and test a measure of classroom climate. Over 400 students participated in these studies, as well as numerous instructors whose disciplines covered a wide variety of college coursework, assisted in developing a reliable and valid measure of classroom climate. In the original study, separate scales measuring ten dimensions of classroom climate were identified. In the second study, eight of those scales which met rigorous reliability standards and three different validity criteria were selected. The resulting instrument contains 38 items measuring eight distinct dimensions of the classroom environment. At present the Hitt-Thomas Inventory of Classroom Climate measures the following areas:

1. Cohesiveness. Measures the group interaction and social facilitation emphasized in the class.
2. Support. Measures the extent to which the instructor plays a supportive role by giving responsibility and providing the proper structure, guidelines, aid, and reward.
3. Constraining Structure. Measures the degree to which structure limits new ideas and generates criticism or embarrassment.
4. Affiliation. Measures gregariousness, group-centeredness, friendliness and participative associations in the classroom.
5. Ego Motivation. Measures the amount of influence and involvement in outside social and political activities.
6. Reward. Measures the amount of emphasis placed on reward using such indicators as grades and freedom in the classroom.
7. Energy. Measures the level of sustained and vigorous effort emphasized in the classroom.
8. Dominance. Measures the degree of instructor control over students. Measures a lack of student involvement and a lack of instructor sympathy and recognition.

Below are sample items from the instrument with the quality that is being measured listed in the right-hand margin. Students respond to each item using a Likert scale indicating reactions from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

ITEM	CLIMATE DIMENSION
• The instructor doesn't require your checking everything with him/her; if you think you've got the right approach, you just go ahead.	Reward
• Students have a good deal of respect for those who do well in this classroom.	Ego Motivation
• Classroom discussions are often exciting, with a lot of active student participation.	Cohesiveness

• It's very hard to get to know people in this class.	Affiliation
• You don't get much sympathy from the instructor in this class if you make a mistake.	Dominance
• There is a great deal of criticism in this class.	Constraining Structure
• The assignments in this class are clearly defined and logically structured.	Support
• The instructor demands a great deal of students.	Energy

Much of the research suggests that no "ideal climate" exists for all learning situations. In addition, different course materials and different techniques may require different classroom climates for most effective results. A course in organizational behavior and a course in biology may require different climates to achieve the best learning experience for the student.

For most effective use of the instrument, instructors should do three things: First, they should design their class materials and techniques for each course and then decide, in advance, what they believe the ideal classroom climate should be (determining which dimension should be low and which high for each class). Once an ideal pattern is in mind, the faculty member can measure classroom climate one or two months into the semester to see if the climate is what was desired. Second, once measured, classroom climates should be compared with measures of learning used (e.g. exams, papers) to determine those climates that seem to be producing the best results for each course. Third, scores on the classroom climate dimensions for each course may be compared over time as the instructor tries new approaches, new material and makes other changes in the course. This allows the instructor to obtain feedback on the effects of those changes.

The instrument can be used in most classroom settings and is especially useful to faculty in establishing the best learning environment possible. Perhaps most unique--this measure, unlike most evaluation instruments, allows the instructor to determine the effect of a particular classroom climate in eight areas--all of which can be changed by the faculty member. Much more than a typical "happiness index," the inventory is based on dimensions of classroom environment which are known to affect student performance. Knowing the results of this measure and responding to them can make you more effective.

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Oklahoma State University

For further information or copies of the instrument write
Michael A. Hitt, Management Department, College of Business Administration, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. Also see Hitt, Michael A. and Thomas, Robert H. "The Development of An Inventory To Measure Classroom Climate," The Teaching of Organization Behavior, 2, 1976, 37-39.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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BLACKBOARD JUMBLE

If, at first thought, the simple act of writing with a piece of chalk on a blackboard hardly seems like a skill, then perhaps it is because we so seldom stop to look at our blackboard work from our students' point of view. Yet, the subject of faculty use of the board comes up repeatedly in workshops as faculty make presentations for videotape replay. McKeachie reflects the view of many faculty when he says that "one of the most useful audiovisual devices continues to be the blackboard."[1] The guiding principle of chalk talk is: Look at your writing as though you were a student in your own class. Probably, almost anything you put on the board will be clear to you; the test that you must pass is to make your blackboard presentation clear to a student seeing it for the first time.

1. Seeing and reading. Even in an average-sized room, students in the back rows may have trouble reading words written in a small handwriting, and they may not be able to read even very large words if they are scrawled or written too lightly. Unless the floor of the classroom is sloped, students of average height sitting behind the first two rows will not be able to see the bottom of the board. To find the effective bottom of the board, sit in the last row while your class is occupied with some task and note the line below which a student of average height would find it difficult to copy notes. You might want to mark this line with a piece of chalk. If there is a desk at the front of the class, keep it clear of objects (e.g., lectern or briefcase) that might obstruct vision.

Try to keep your work visible for as long as possible. If you are righthanded, fill the right-hand panel first; then move to the panel on the left and continue your writing. In this way, you will not be blocking the view of students copying the writing that you have just completed. If you are using a sliding, three-layered blackboard, fill the middle board first, then push it up and pull the front board down. When the front board is full, push it up and use the back board.

2. Time to copy. Most students will copy everything that you write on the board. If you ask them to analyze an idea, they will not begin to think analytically until they have finished copying. When you want to make a point, stop writing. Let people catch up with you (they may be lagging behind by two or three lines). Then begin your discussion. Similarly, if you have engaged in a long discussion without writing very much on the board, allow time to summarize the discussion in their own minds and to write their summary down in their notes before you again begin to use the board or speak.

Students are sure to be frustrated if the instructor modifies part of his/her boardwork before they have a chance to copy it. A physics instructor may reach a crucial point in the derivation of an equation and then quickly erase and replace terms. A biology instructor may draw a diagram and then rapidly change first one part of the diagram and then another to show a process. A good rule of thumb is: Erase only when you have run out of space to write. Then erase only the oldest or least important work, and erase the entire panel to avoid implying a connection between the new work and any unerased work.

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If you find that you have made a mistake; explain it, then go back and make corrections, preferably with a different color of chalk. If you are modifying a drawing, use dotted lines or some other technique to show changes. Remember that students cannot make the same erasures that you do without losing their written record of intermediate steps: you can alter parts of a drawing much faster than they can reproduce the whole thing.

3. Organization. (a) First erase the board completely. This step is especially important in mathematics, where stray lines may be interpreted as symbols. (b) If you are to solve a problem or prove a theorem, write a complete statement of the problem or theorem on the board, or write a precise reference. (c) Fill in one panel at a time, always starting at the top and moving down. (d) Make your notation consistent with that in the textbook or throughout the lecture, so that students do not have to translate from one system of symbols to another. (e) Underline, or in some other way mark, the most important parts of your presentation--the major assumptions, or conclusions, or the intermediate steps that you plan to refer to later on. Colored chalk may help to clarify drawings. (f) At best, the blackboard is only a teaching aid. It cannot substitute for a logical presentation of the material. Break your presentation into manageable parts and give students a chance to deal with facts and concepts as you present each part, or just afterward. Then verbally outline the next part of your presentation. If you neglect to do this, your students may be copying blindly, without any idea of where you are going.

EVALUATING YOUR BLACKBOARD WORK. You can determine your effectiveness at the board in several ways: (a) After class, without prior notice, request one of your "A" and one of your "C" students to lend you their notes. If the notes seem incomplete, ask yourself: "What could I have done to help them catch the points that they missed?" (b) Stop yourself twenty minutes into your presentation and ask yourself, "If I were one of these students, would all of the major points written on the blackboard be clear and coherent?" If you are not sure of the answer, ask your students. (c) View a videotape of your presentation, putting yourself in the place of a student taking notes. Did you violate any guidelines suggested in this paper? What were your reasons for doing so?

Properly used, the blackboard can be a valuable teaching aid.

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Ron Hennessey
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[1]McKeachie, Wilbert. Teaching Tips. 7th Edition. Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1970, p. 135.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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Innovation Abstracts

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DISCOVERING HIDDEN PREREQUISITES: THE INTERFACE PROJECT

Members of the faculty-staffed Developmental Curriculum Committee at Jefferson Community College in Louisville, Kentucky had for quite some time suspected that our attrition rate was at least partially due to a lack of student preparedness for the regular college program, and that there were "hidden" prerequisites to the college level courses that were never addressed in catalog descriptions. In 1977 we requested and received permission from the Coordinating Committee for Developmental Studies to do a study on the "hidden" prerequisites to see (1) if they did indeed exist, and if they did, (2) what effect they would have on our entering students.

The committee interviewed faculty to obtain information for a questionnaire. Faculty members who taught the same course met in groups with a committee member, and a single questionnaire was completed for each course. In many cases, this opened lines of communication between faculty members within the same discipline. Faculty discovered many differences in their approaches to teaching the same course: some gave essay exams while others used short answer exams; some used contract grading; some counted attendance while others did not; some expected more themes than others for Freshman English. We learned that the essence of our process was this face-to-face dialogue--hence "Interface."

The first part of the questionnaire itself had a series of questions on communication, mathematical, cognitive, psychomotor, affective, reading and study skills and classroom behavior. The questionnaire then went on to look at class formats for assignments, material presentation, examinations and grades. The latter portion of the questionnaire is cross-checked with the first for consistency. For example, if a faculty member said that paragraph writing is essential for the class but did not expect written assignments or give essay examinations, the declared requirement would be disregarded.

After synthesis by the committee, we found that the results of the questionnaire supported our suspicions that there are indeed hidden prerequisites in college level courses. Some first semester courses, for example, required term papers, a topic not covered until second semester Freshman English. Many courses required both individual work and group work and the independent use of effective study techniques--all not taught explicitly in any of the Developmental courses.

The questionnaire and the results enabled the committee to make several recommendations regarding (1) ways to improve student advising for more accurate placement of students; (2) ways to make actual course level requirements clearer to students; (3) new courses--one dealing with classroom behavior and affective skills and another dealing with notetaking and general study skills. The questionnaire itself follows.

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Jefferson Community College, Louisville, Kentucky

For further information see "Interface", Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education, Fall, 1979.

Karen Watkins, Editor
October 10, 1980, Vol. II, no. 24

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FACULTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
JEFFERSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

PART I. Expectations from Students

Rank each of the following skills with respect to reasonable expectations of students in the first semester freshman level course as you now teach it.

4 = Skill is neither taught nor introduced. (Skill must be developed prior to class entry. Those without skill will probably receive a "D" or lower grade.)

3 = Skill is not introduced, but advanced techniques may be taught. (Fully developed skill is required for "C" or better. Rudiments of skill should be present at entry. Further development will occur through course work.)

2 = Skill is introduced and taught as part of course work. (Skill is not required for entrance, but is introduced and developed as part of the course.)

1 = Skill is not required for this course.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Written	Oral
General Skills		
a. Construction of clear, complete sentences		
b. Construction of organized paragraphs with topic sentence & supporting details.		
c. Development of organized essay		
Component Skills		
b. Correct grammar		
b. Correct punctuation (or inflection)		
c. Interesting sentence variety		
d. Clear enunciation		
e. Appropriate volume		

COGNITIVE SKILLS	The student is expected to Recognize	Construct
a. Verbal definitions of concepts developed in class		
b. Visual relationship (graphs, drawings, etc.) given in class		
c. Classifications (inclusive categories) given in class		
d. Causations developed in class		
e. Compare and contrast concepts developed in class		
f. Logical deduction of information developed in class		
g. Operational analysis		
1. Patterns (sequencing, recurrence of ideas, etc.)		
2. Organization of information as presented in class		
3. Extraction of main idea within course material		
4. Relationships of ideas within course material		

MATHEMATICS

a. Recognize standard geometric figures (triangles, circles, etc.) _____
b. Interpret charts, graphs or tables (interpolation, extrapolation, calculation of slopes, etc.) _____
c. Correctly use standard operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) with whole numbers _____
d. Correctly use standard operations with fractions _____
e. Correctly use standard operations with logarithms _____
f. Correctly use standard operations with decimals _____
g. Correctly manipulate algebraic expressions _____
h. Solve word-mathematics problems _____

PSYCHOMOTOR SKILLS

Gross Motor Skills - Use large movement (lifting, etc.) _____
(If answer is 3 or 4, specify & give weight and/or rate.) _____

Fine Motor Skills -
Use fine movement involving precise exact coordination (sewing, printing, writing, etc.) _____

Laboratory Techniques -
a. Correctly handling delicate instruments _____
b. Correctly handling of delicate equipment (glass, etc.) _____

READING

Reading ability (in grade level) according to your estimation or knowledge that is required for success in course ("C" or better). Note: Consider both textual and outside reading assignments. _____

STUDY SKILLS

a. Competent Note-Taking
__From Lecture __From Discussion __From A-V
__From Text
b. Locate reference material in library or resource center__
c. Use dictionary or similar reference__
d. Other (Specify)
_____ __

AFFECTIVE SKILLS

Rate those affective skills you perceive as necessary for success in your class ("C" or better) from 1 - 4 (unimportant to important).

a. Student relies on instructor's goals _____
b. Student is expected to work independently
with course material _____
on special projects _____
c. Student is expected to cooperate in group sharing
trying out ideas _____
giving constructive criticism to other students _____
d. Student is expected to assume responsibility for grade _____
e. Student is expected to provide own enrichment _____
f. Student is expected to lead class discussion _____
g. Student is expected to take part in class discussion
expressing own ideas _____
asking questions regarding covered information _____
asking questions about extensions of material _____
h. Student is expected to have time to work with classmates on project outside of class _____

APPROPRIATE CLASS BEHAVIOR

Rate those classroom behaviors you perceive as necessary for success in your class ("C" or better) from 1 - 4 (unimportant to important).

a. Regular attendance _____
b. On time to class _____
c. Alert during class _____
d. Prepared for class with . . .
book purchased within first week _____
notebook _____
writing instrument _____
other (specify)_____ _____
e. Acceptable format for papers _____
f. Concern for learning _____

PART II. Class Format

Check applicable terms and give requested information for the following aspects of the first semester freshman level course as you now teach it.

CLASSROOM FORMAT

☐ Lecture___ ☐ Discussion___ ☐ Audio-Visual___
☐ Student reports and/or speeches___ ☐ Guest speakers__
☐ Other (specify)_____ ___
(If more than one is checked, please give approximate % time each form is used.)

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

Assigned group activities	__Frequency___/sem.
Text reading assigned	__Frequency___/sem.
Article readings assigned	__Frequency___/sem.
Abstract reading assigned	__Frequency___/sem.
Written articles, papers, themes	__Frequency___/sem.
Written outlines, abstracts or summaries	__Frequency___/sem.
Written research papers	__Frequency___/sem.
Prepared oral presentation	__Frequency___/sem.
Assigned problem solving	__Frequency___/sem.

READING MATERIALS

Reading level of text presently used in course _____
___estimation, or ___calculation (by experienced personnel)
Reading level of outside readings assigned _____
___estimation, or___calculation (by experienced personnel)
(Check one.)

EXAMINATION FORMAT

Short Answer
If checked, check one or more of the following:
☐ Multiple choice___ ☐ Fill-in the blank___
☐ True-False___ ☐ Matching___
☐ Other (specify)_____ ___
(If more than one is checked, please give approximate % of each used.)

Long Answer
If checked, check one or more of the following:
☐ Standard essay (two or more paragraphs) ___
☐ Short essay (one sentence to one paragraph) ___
☐ Problem solving
(If more than one is checked, please give approximate % of each used.)
Percentage of examinations that require recognition and/or identification. _____
Percentage of examination questions taken from reading assignments on material *not* covered in class. _____

GRADE DETERMINATION

Percentage of final grade based upon. . .
___Attendance ___Average of examination grades
___Participation in class discussion
___Out of class assignments (homework)
___Individual improvement
___Other (specify)_____

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LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

The dog is placed in a shuttle box. A current of electricity, painful but not physically harmful, jolts the animal. He moves about frantically for about thirty seconds then lies down, whines, and passively accepts the shock. He does not look for the escape route that is available. After a full minute, the shock is over. A second dog is placed in the same box. He too frantically tries to escape the shock until he discovers the escape route and crosses the barrier to the shock-free side of the shuttle box. On the next trial this second dog escapes more quickly. Soon he is an efficient escape artist. Nonchalantly he responds to the signal, leaps, and avoids shock.

The difference? Before he was placed in the shuttle box, the first dog had been strapped in a hammock and given shock which he couldn't control or avoid. The second dog was what researchers term "naive." He had received no previous shock. To determine that the physical aftereffects of the shock were not the cause of passivity, a third dog was "yoked" with the first. He too was shocked while strapped in a hammock, but by pressing a panel with his nose, he was able to control the shock. Later, when this third yoked dog was placed in the shuttle box, he learned the escape route. The experiment suggested that it was the inability to control the shock that produced passivity.

The paradigmatic learned helplessness finding frequently demonstrated in similar laboratory experiments, and first articulated by Martin Seligman, is that "when an organism experiences trauma it cannot control, its motivation to respond in the face of later trauma wanes." This debilitation has been shown in cats, rats, mice, birds, primates, fish, cockroaches, and Man. Later, when Seligman and other scientists tried to rehabilitate the passive, helpless dog, a whole series of their persuasive maneuvers failed. They removed the barrier between compartments making it easy for the dog to reach safety. He did not move. One experimenter stood on the box's safe side and called and coaxed the dog. He did not come. Food was placed on the safe side to tantalize him to safety. He would not come. What finally worked was leashing the dog and physically pulling him to safety -- over and over again. After 25 to 200 draggings the dog began to respond! Fortunately, however, the animal's recovery was complete.

Applications for Human Behavior

(1) The motivation to respond is sapped; the victim no longer is willing to try. Even if there is a positive response to effort, the person who has learned to be helpless doesn't associate responses with relief.

(2) The ability to learn is disrupted because the person can't determine if or when she has successfully responded to stimuli.

(3) The emotions of the person are unnaturally heightened. Victims frequently lose touch with time and show unhealthy forms of anxiety.

In connection with these three outcomes, laboratory evidence suggests these further attributes of learned helplessness:

(1) Passivity becomes characteristic behavior. After an initial experience, when the naive dogs' cages were approached and they anticipated more shocks, they resisted--barked and pressed to the back of the cage, etc. But the helpless dogs became submissive, sometimes even rolling over and playing dead.

(2) A feeling of uncontrollability in one situation is generalized to other situations. However, helplessness is likely to be generalized only from more important to less important events, not vice-versa.
(3) Uncontrollable reward may also be debilitating. In experiments with animals and humans, when subjects were rewarded without making an effort, helplessness developed.
(4) Uncontrollable trauma dissipates in time. A dog who is 24 hours away from its initial shock experience will exhibit helplessness. If 72 hours is allowed to pass, the same dog can escape the shuttle box.
(5) If the importance of a task is stressed, helplessness will increase when an uncontrollable element is introduced.
(6) Fatigue and isolation may accelerate feelings of helplessness.
(7) Placing high value on effort rather than ability seems to slow down feelings of helplessness among student populations.

Solutions

Since the behavior associated with learned helplessness seems deadly to the learning experience, we cannot help but ask what we can do if we're working with adults who feel helpless, who carry with them the baggage of uncontrollable experiences. Learning from curative methods Seligman and others employ as therapists, we as teachers can:

(1) Attempt to make the learning environment DIFFERENT from ones where students have learned helplessness in the past.

(2) We can provide several early successful learning experiences that are not merely "give-away" assignments, but are the result of genuine effort by students, and we must articulate the connection between student effort and results.

(3) We can use time, and the dissipation effects time offers, as a curative for helplessness. Adults returning to school, especially those who have been away several years, may have forgotten typical helpless feelings of their youth. We should try not to remind tham. For others, simply beginning a new semester may be beneficial.

(4) We can pair these students with internal personalities who sense their own control over class activities.

(5) We can state our expectations verbally, telling students what we believe they can accomplish. Hopefully this predisposes patience in students and makes them willing to last through an arduous learning experience. It may also help students to visualize a different scenario than the one that has typically brought them feelings of helplessness in the past.

Scientists believe that what gives us self-esteem, makes us feel competent, and protects against depression is our perception that we can control experience. Any time those of us involved in instruction can convince students that their efforts are not in vain, that they can achieve, we have fought against the debilitating effects of learned helplessness.

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Program in Community College Education
The University of Texas at Austin

Oscar Mink, Coordinator
Graduate Program in Human Resource Development
The University of Texas at Austin

For further information see

Seligman, Martin E. P. Learned Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death Freeman: 1975.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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PERSONAL COMMUNITIES: NETWORKING TO INCREASE YOUR IMPACT

A public relations executive receives a phone call from the owner of an airport where he occasionally rents hot air balloons. The owner is interested in contacting Jerry Lewis to donate balloon rides for the Jerry Lewis Telethon; he has heard that the executive knows Lewis.... A lobbyist for an international conglomerate learns that his company needs to contact one of its employees who is "somewhere in the Middle East." The lobbyist calls an acquaintance in the Middle East section of the State Department; the employee is located the next day.

The people in these scenarios are engaged in organizational activity. They may not be doing formally recognized "work," but their activities are of direct relevance to organizational accomplishment. They are using personal contacts; in the process of using contacts, they are expanding their contact network, their "personal community." One's personal community consists of all the people he or she can call on for information and certain kinds of favors, and by extension, all the people those contacts can call on. Researchers estimate that no person is more than seven contacts from any other person in this country. The apparent fact that there are differences in how well people develop and use these personal communities leads to the question we address here: What barriers prevent people from developing as useful a community as they might, and what are the methods by which people develop a useful personal community?

FUNCTIONS OF PERSONAL COMMUNITIES

A personal community provides one with: a path to action, early warning about forthcoming decisions, interpretation of bureaucratic messages, and a sense of belonging.

A Path to Action Our research has shown that people with extensive personal communities see themselves as actors in the world, as "proactive" rather than "reactive." Their action takes the form of contacting people and following reference to reference until they find a person to help with the project on which they are working. They often seek information or help on a problem before it is clear what their needs are or who can assist them. In this sense people who have extensive personal communities are both confident and vulnerable.

Early Warning Early warning (or "grapevine") information allows a person to either attempt to shape the direction a decision is going, or to prepare for the consequences.

Interpretation The more bureaucratic their organizational setting, the more respondents tell stories about times when they have used contacts for information about what a formal document means. For example, the essential step in winning a federal grant may be to get to know officials in the granting agency in order to understand what the agency is really looking for.

Sense of Belonging A personal community or emotional home differs from a geographic designation of community because it has no geographical boundary, and is linked directly to a focal person, i.e.--the community "belongs" to the focal person and he/she to it.

Originally we thought that there were two major barriers to extending one's personal community: (1) the belief that doing work through contacts is unethical (e.g. "brown-nosing"), and (2) a non-assertive style which prevents one from taking the risk of making a new acquaintance. But further reflection has convinced us that the real

barrier lies underneath both the ethical principles and interpersonal fears which are visible as surface barriers. Success in developing personal contacts is achieved by seeing the process as a natural one, by taking it for granted as it were. Once people start to plan to make contacts, they are likely to be seen as "connivers." They are likely to fail--even to cause themselves to fail.

EXTENDING ONE'S PERSONAL COMMUNITY

Personal communities are by-products of goal-seeking interaction. The means to achieving a larger and more useful personal community is to take on a project, or perhaps several projects. Those who succeed in forming networks talk enthusiastically about building--they have a department to build, a school to build, a business to build, a campaign to build. The work of building demands that they contact people. People met in one context become contacts in another. Thus the sense of working on a project turns the conversation away from a focus on the people involved. Participants are not self-conscious, and the question of risk is reduced since people ask for favors for the good of the project and not for personal gain or loss. We believe pursuing a project which involves coordination is a necessary condition for extending one's personal community. It builds a need for "exposure." People with extensive personal communities get around a lot. They go to conferences and meetings; they spend time in airplanes.

Personal communities thrive better in places where resources are not seen as scarce. It is far easier to make contacts asking for advice, rather than money, since advice is a free resource for most people to give out. Personal contacts are rooted in voluntary behavior. The key motivation is the contact's willingness to respond to another's needs when there is no requirement to do so. Providers of help enjoy performing most when they have time and energy to do so.

Finally, three interpersonal style characteristics are particularly important in extending personal communities: "giving," "asking," and signaling "nonstrangerness." Our research indicates that the concept of gift-giving is an indispensable element in constructing personal communities. People with extensive contacts are givers. They pass along information. They think of what might be useful to others, and then they tell them about it. They give a lot of their time, serving on committees, for example, for which they receive no immediately visible reward. They are adept at the use of "efficient gifts"--gifts which cost them little or nothing, but give great benefit to the receiver. Contrary to the popular stereotype, the masters of personal contacts are not constantly asking, "What can this person do for me?" Rather giving is obviously pleasurable to the giver. But more than this, giving is a style for these people; they do it because they do it. If some payment is expected in return, the time frame is vague and the exact nature of the return is unspecified. The secret is that in giving a person creates a relationship with her recipient. This explains why people with lots of personal contacts see no risk in asking for favors. The master of contacts asks for what is best for the project and, as a by-product, continues to extend his/her community. A third style characteristic of people who have extensive personal communities is that they talk to people as if they are friends. We phrase this in an awkward way: people extend their contacts by signaling "non-strangerness."

Building personal communities can make you more effective in your work and part of a larger human community--your personal human community.

Bonnie Johnson, Pennsylvania State University
Larry Browning, University of Texas at Austin

This Abstract was excerpted from a paper presented to the Annual Convention of the International Communication Association, May 1979, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

For further information

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Innovation Abstracts

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THE COLLEGE ASSISTANCE FOR MIGRANTS PROGRAM

Back in 1972 the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) gave us startup funding for a program for migrants and said in effect, "Go find the best home to make sure such a program succeeds." So began an eight year journey. We ultimately selected St. Edward's University, a small Catholic university in Austin, Texas. We think that how we fared and what we built has implications for your institution, especially if you are serving underprepared, first generation college students.

Program Characteristics

How do you find the best college home for migrant students? What are the program characteristics that a college must be willing and able to provide? Based on extensive research and practical experience, we believed our new home had to have the following components:

We presumed our migrant students needed to develop a strong sense of community, at least during the first semester. The transition from the migrant fields to a college classroom requires an enormous change in focus, requiring more time than a week during orientation and registration.

First, we made sure that the students knew each other and we knew them. We began with a 14-day pre-college enrichment program that developed close staff-student relationships, provided for catch-up instruction in math, reading, writing and study skills, and offered individual testing and counseling. All instruction except study skills was provided by regular university faculty, which provided yet another opportunity to promote mutual respect and concern between the students and those who, in some ways, would come to stand in place of the family--the faculty. For a modest investment of resources (stipends paid to faculty for their enrichment program teaching), the return in commitment to and support of the program was enormous.

Second, we made a contract, an honest bilateral contract with the students. Each student gave written assurance that he/she would

(a) attend all mandatory program meetings and no less than 85% of all classes,
(b) meet with both a peer and professional counselor at least weekly both in individual and group settings,
(c) attend at least five hours of tutoring a week,
(d) take all scheduled tests,
(e) agree to an individualized social and academic development plan, and
(f) participate in the financial aid budgeting program.

In return for honoring their commitment, the students received written assurances that they would receive

(a) one year of financial aid composed only of scholarships and grants,
(b) an academic support program tailored to their needs, one that would guarantee success in the classroom,
(c) a staff that was supportive and sensitive to their background and needs, and
(d) if successful during the first year, the college guaranteed three more years of complete financial aid.

Third, we designed a special financial aid package. No loans or workstudy arrangements were permitted during the freshman year (then there was no chance of

loan defaults or undue pressure from a loan agreement that they, or their parents, would not understand). We structured the package so that no migrant student would graduate in four years owing more than $4000 in student loans. It was understood that they would accept no outside jobs their first year because their work might become more important than their grades, thereby eroding their academic performance. During the first year, all financial aid for personal expenses was dispensed on a monthly basis in the form of an educational expense voucher, based on a monthly budget submitted by each student. To our surprise, most students actually underbudgeted their allowable maximum and then saved the rest at a local bank.

Fourth, we provided a whole array of support, especially key personnel to pay attention to individual needs. We wanted no one to get lost or feel unattended. To insure this, we developed a facilitator program using seasoned upper-division students to assist CAMP students in their acclimation to university life, helping them diagnose personal problems which might hinder academic or social growth, and generally playing a big brother or sister role when needed. The tutorial support program provided tutoring to each student, and the counseling program provided professional counselors.

Another element of our support structure was the student recruitment program. We based program acceptance primarily on letters of recommendation, individual letters from each applicant, summer enrichment program completion, and individual agreement with program requirements. High GPA or class standing was not the predominant factor in admission to the University. In tandem with our recruitment effort, our retention program was based on "normal progress" criteria and emphasized student motivation, the development of good study skills, and adherence to all contract terms. This approach lessened the fear of having to make a specific GPA early in their college experience. In fact, we found that when students completed all their contracts, their GPA scores took care of themselves. It was simply a case of breaking down the desired result (GPA) into its behavioral components (go to class, be tutored, take tests, etc.) All program students meeting our normal progress criteria would not be placed in a probationary status for at least three semesters regardless of their GPA. Our university staff and faculty gave feedback that provided the program staff with immediate information on any student who might need help or who was having difficulty in meeting normal progress criteria. Finally, we knew we needed a good summer work program. We recognized that, as part of our approach of making the total environment support the student's academic efforts, we had to have a 12-month, not just a 9-month program or we would lose a number of students. Our Trustees provided over 50 job slots for the first summer and have been actively involved ever since.

PROGRAM RESULTS

Each of these components is effective in its own right. However, it has been our experience that the best program success comes from implementing all of these components, from building a total environment of support. At this time, approximately 90% of the enrolling CAMP freshmen complete their first year of college. Their grade point average is about 2.4 with 14 credit hours typically completed per semester. And what is more amazing is that while most migrant students who start high school never finish, migrant students who start CAMP not only finish the program but complete college degrees in greater numbers than their non-migrant Chicano, Black, and Anglo student counterparts.

So happily it's working. We think it can work for you too.

F. Eugene Binder and Richard Kinsey
President's Office
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Karen Watkins, Editor

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THE ABILENE PARADOX: THE MANAGEMENT OF AGREEMENT

This abstract is concerned with a paradox—the Abilene Paradox. I named it for a memorable experience that occurred some years past when on a hot July afternoon in Coleman, Texas, my wife and I and my wife's visiting parents drove fifty-three miles to Abilene in an unairconditioned 1958 Buick just to have dinner at a cafeteria! Returning some four hours later, hot and exhausted, we unhappily discovered *none* of us had really wanted to make the trip. In fact, to be more accurate, we'd done just the opposite of what we wanted to do. The whole situation simply didn't make sense.

Stated simply, the Abilene Paradox is as follows: *Organizations frequently take actions in contradiction to their real desires*, therefore defeating the very purposes they are trying to achieve. It also deals with a major corollary of the paradox, which is that *the inability to manage agreement is a major source of organization dysfunction.*

Symptoms of the Paradox

The inability to manage agreement, not the inability to manage conflict, is the essential symptom that defines organizations caught in the web of the Abilene Paradox. That inability to effectively manage agreement is expressed by six specific symptoms, all of which were present in our family group as we made the Abilene trip:

1. Members agree privately about a problem facing the organization.
2. Members agree privately as to the steps to solution.
3. Members fail to communicate their true feelings accurately. In fact, they hide their misgivings.
4. With such invalid and inaccurate information, organization members make poor, counterproductive collective decisions.
5. As a result, members experience frustration, anger, irritation, and dissatisfaction with their organization. They form subgroups with trusted acquaintances and blame other subgroups, authority figures, and one another.
6. Finally, if members do not find ways to manage agreement, the cycle repeats itself with greater intensity.

Analyzing the Paradox

Like all paradoxes, the Abilene Paradox deals with absurdity. On the surface, it makes little sense for organizations, whether they are couples or companies, bureaucracies or governments, to take actions that are diametrically opposed to the data they possess for solving crucial problems. Such actions are particularly absurd, since they tend to compound the very problems they are designed to solve. The psychological themes, stated sequentially, that underlie such seemingly paradoxical actions include:

Action Anxiety—Intense anxiety is created as members think about acting on their beliefs when they appear to contradict the collective understanding. As a result, they choose to endure the professional and economic degradation of pursuing the unworkable. It is not that organization members do not know what needs to be done—they do know.

Negative Fantasies—Organization members have negative fantasies about acting on their beliefs. They fear what will happen as a consequence of their sensible actions. The negative fantasies provide the individual with an excuse that releases him psychologically, both in his own eyes and frequently in the eyes of others, from the responsibility of having to act to solve the organization's problems.

Real Risk—Risk is a reality of life, a condition of existence. But an unwillingness to accept existential risk as one of life's givens causes people to take their organizations to Abilene rather than run the risk, no matter how small, of ending up somewhere worse.

Fear of Separation—Actually, we do not fear what is unknown, but rather what we do know about. Separation, alienation, and loneliness are things we do know about—and fear. Both research and experience indicate that ostracism is one of the most powerful punishments that can be devised. The fear of taking risks that may result in our separation from others is at the core of the paradox.

The Psychological Reversal of Risk and Certainty—We frequently fail to take action in an organizational setting because we fear that the actions we take may result in our separation from others. But therein lies a paradox within a paradox, because our very unwillingness to take such risks virtually ensures the separation and loneliness we fear.

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Diagnosing and Confronting the Paradox

I support the general thesis of Alvin Toffler and Philip Slater who contend that our cultural emphasis on technology, competition, individualism, temporariness, and mobility has resulted in a population that has frequently experienced the terror of loneliness and seldom the satisfaction of engagement. Consequently, though we have learned of the reality of separation, we have not had the opportunity to learn the skills of connection, with the result that, like the ancient dinosaurs, we are breeding organizations with self-destructive decision-making proclivities.

I do have two sets of suggestions for dealing with these situations. One set of suggestions relates to diagnosing the situation, the other to confronting it. I have found it relatively easy to make a preliminary diagnosis as to whether an organization is on the way to Abilene or is involved in legitimate, substantive conflict and have devised the following Diagnostic Survey. If your answer to the first question is "not characteristic," the organization is probably neither going to Abilene or in conflict. If the answer is "characteristic," the organization has a problem and the answers to the succeeding questions should help you determine what type of problem you have—whether you need to better manage agreement or conflict. Answer either "characteristic" or "uncharacteristic" to items 2-8. The more "characteristic" responses, the more likely you have a problem managing agreement.

ORGANIZATION DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY

1. There is conflict in the organization.
2. Organization members feel frustrated, impotent, and unhappy when trying to deal with it. Many are looking for ways to escape. They may only avoid meetings at which the conflict is discussed, they may be looking for other jobs, or they may spend as much time away from the office as possible by taking unneeded trips or vacation or sick leave.
3. Organization members place much of the blame for the dilemma on the boss or other groups. In "back room" conversations among friends, the boss is termed incompetent, ineffective, "out of touch," or a candidate for early retirement. To his face, nothing is said, or at best, only oblique references are made concerning his role in the organization's problem. If the boss isn't blamed, some other group, division, or unit is seen as the cause of the trouble, "We would do fine if it were not for the damn fools in Division X."
4. Small subgroups of trusted friends and associates meet informally over coffee, lunch, and so on to discuss organizational problems. There is a lot of agreement among the members of these subgroups as to the cause of the troubles and the solutions that would be effective in solving them. Such conversations are frequently punctuated with statements beginning, "We should do . . ."
5. In meetings where those same people meet with members from other subgroups to discuss the problem, they "soften their positions," state them in ambiguous language, or even reverse them to suit the apparent positions taken by others.
6. After such meetings, members complain to trusted associates that they really didn't say what they wanted to say, but also provide a list of convincing reasons why the comments, suggestions, and reactions they wanted to make would have been impossible. Trusted associates commiserate and say the same was true for them.
7. Attempts to solve the problem do not seem to work. In fact, such attempts seem to add to the problem or make it worse.
8. Individuals seem to get along better, are happier, and operate more effectively outside the organization than they do within it.

Assuming a preliminary diagnosis leads one to believe she and/or her organization is on the way to Abilene, the individual may choose to actively confront the situation to determine directly whether the underlying reality is one of agreement or conflict. Although there are, perhaps, a number of ways to do it, I have found one way to be particularly effective—confrontation in a group setting. The basic approach involves gathering organization members who are key figures in the problem and its solution into a group setting. Working within the context of a group is important, because the dynamics of the Abilene Paradox involve collusion among group members; therefore, to try to solve the dilemma by working with individuals and small subgroups would involve further collusion of the type creating the paradox.

The first step in the meeting is for the individual who "calls" it to own up to his position first and be open to the feedback he gets. The owning up process lets the others know that he is concerned lest the organization may be making a decision contrary to the desires of its members. If he is correct in his diagnosis, the solution to the technical problem may be almost absurdly quick and simple.

Of course, since risk is always present in such a setting, it is possible that one's diagnosis will be incorrect, and the group process will bring to the surface real, substantive conflict, which may result in heated debate. The person who initiates such risk may be fired or ostracized. But whatever the outcome, from my interviews, I have found that those who choose to confront the paradox feel stronger as a result of the process. That is good news for those of us who realize the extent to which seeming agreement masks problems in our organizations.

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Professor of Management Science
George Washington University

For further information see

Harvey, Jerry B. "The Abilene Paradox: The Management of Agreement," *Organizational Dynamics* (Summer, 1974), pp. 63–80.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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BENJAMIN BLOOM REVISITED

"Learning for Mastery" (1968), published by the distinguished educator Benjamin Bloom, professor at the University of Chicago, has been a watershed document for systematic instruction advocates. Bloom's research supported the notion that, given time and appropriate kinds of instructional assistance, most students are capable of learning whatever it is that instructors teach. Many educators jumped on the idea without really understanding what variable time and personalized instructional development meant in terms of technology and instructor training. The results were mixed. Some instructional improvement efforts produced acceptable results; most produced little, if any, improvement in the teaching-learning process.

In a recent article in the Phi Delta Kappan, Bloom discussed what he calls "alterable variables," ingredients that have been shown to produce the results that he promised in his "Learning for Mastery" position paper. The alterable variables outlined by Bloom signal a shift in the focus of educational research from variables difficult to change to those that, when applied, offer relatively easy progress--and hold out promise of improved learning for students. Bloom outlines this shift in emphasis as a movement from:

- studies of instructor and student characteristics to studies of how learning actually occurs under certain conditions;
- studies of the total learning environment to studies of selected variables such as motivation and perseverance;
- studies of what should take place in the classroom to studies that attempt to capture what is actually happening;
- studies of stable variables (e.g.--student aptitude) to studies involving variables that can actually be changed through the efforts of the instructor.

Some findings from research on these alterable variables follows.

Time on Task

Time has been recognized as the central factor in all learning. As a result, we have focused on number of days in a school term and the number of hours of attendance. These are relatively fixed or unalterable elements. Quite in contrast to this notion is the concept of time on task. Increases in observable student time on task can be accomplished by designing curriculum materials and strategies to require student interaction--either with the materials, with the instructor, or with other students. An example would be a learning activity packet in which student responses can be recorded and evaluated. The extent to which the student is engaged in active learning can be determined through immediate or end of semester opportunities for students to recall data (testing), interviews with students, and student evaluations of instruction. The key challenge to instructors is to increase by any available means the time that students actually spend in learning.

Intelligence vs. Entry Level Cognitive Skills

During much of this century, educators have used intelligence and aptitude tests to predict school achievement. Institutions have often used these scores as the basis for long-term decisions about students--e.g. selection, placement, and grouping.

Unfortunately, these data also often set expectations between students and instructors and may limit opportunities for further education for some students.

Intelligence and aptitude tests may be contrasted with instruments that attempt to measure cognitive characteristics. These cognitive tests measure specific knowledge, abilities, or skills that are essential prerequisites for learning a particular subject. Prior mastery of cognitive entry characteristics has a high relationship to achievement, particularly in sequential learning tasks such as math or language acquisition. According to Bloom, cognitive entry characteristics can improve dramatically; large gains in final achievement are possible when students are brought to high levels of achievement on the prerequisites for each new learning task before beginning instruction on the new task or skill.

Many colleges are now remediating poor cognitive entry skills through forced assignment to developmental programs in which students accomplish basic tasks before taking on more difficult ones. More direct remediation of cognitive skills through cognitive learning labs is also being offered by some colleges.

Summative vs. Formative Testing

Instructors typically employ achievement tests once or twice a semester. Such summative tests serve the purpose of determining the extent to which students have mastered the objectives of a course. Once these infrequent tests are completed, the student is rarely given an opportunity to correct mistakes or to be retested on the content not mastered.

In contrast, formative tests measure the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes or skills as an integral part of the formation of learning. These tests become a part of the learning process and serve as feedback to inform students about what has been learned as well as what remains to be learned. According to Bloom's research, when feedback is provided in a coaching manner and is continued with additional time and help, most students reach a standard of excellence.

Instructors vs. Instruction

Historically, educational research has dealt with instructor characteristics and their relation to student learning. More recently, research has centered on the qualities of instruction which have a direct causal relationship to inducing student learning.

Several qualities of instruction have proven to be effective: providing cues or clear instructions as to what is to be done and how to accomplish an assigned task; offering reinforcement or reward to students involved in the teaching/learning process; and encouraging participation in terms of active engagement of students in the learning process.

Bloom categorically states that twelve years of recent research have clearly pointed out that when the interactions of instructors and their students are altered, there is significant improvement in student learning. The implications for higher education are clear. Colleges that characterize themselves as primarily teaching-learning institutions must find ways to incorporate these research findings.

George A. Baker, Executive Director
National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development

For further information

Bloom, Benjamin S. "The New Direction in Educational Research: Alterable Variables" Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 61, No. 6 (February, 1980), pp. 382-385.

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FABLE OF THE ROASTED PIGS

Once upon a time a forest where some pigs lived caught on fire and all the pigs were roasted. Men, who at that time were in the habit of eating raw meat only, tasted the roasted pigs and found them delicious. From that time on, whenever men wanted roast pork they set a forest on fire. But for a long time things had not been as they should be: often the pigs were burned almost to a crisp, sometimes they were partially raw, and at other times they were so completely damaged that it was hardly possible to make any use of them at all.

Due to the many bad points of The System, complaints grew at an increasing rate as The System was expanded to involve more and more people; it was the general desire that The System should be drastically changed. Thus every year there were any number of conventions, congresses, and conferences, and a considerable amount of time and effort was spent in search of a solution. But apparently no way of improving The System was ever found, for the next year and the year after that there were once more conventions and congresses and conferences.

Those who were experts on the subject put down the failure of The System to a lack of discipline on the part of the pigs, who would not stay where they should in the forests; or to the inconstant nature of fire; or to the dampness of the earth; or to the official method of setting the woods on fire; or on the Roast Pork Weather Service, which did not accurately predict the time, place and amount of rain; or . . . .

There were people who worked at setting the woods on fire (fire starters). They specialized in setting different zones, and so on. There were also the wind specialists, the anemotechnicians. There were huge plants to hold the pigs before the fire broke out in the forest, and methods were being tested on how to let the pigs out at just the right moment. There were technicians in pig feeding, experts in building pig pens, professors in charge of training experts in pig pen construction, research specialists who bequeathed their discoveries to the universities that prepared professors to be in charge of training experts in pig pen construction, and . . . .

One day a fire starter named John Commonsense in Category SW/DM/RS (southwest specialty, daily-morning, licensed for rainy summers) said that the problem was really very simple and easily solved. He said that in order to solve the problem with ease, only four steps need be followed. The chosen pig had to be (1) killed, (2) cleaned, (3) placed in the proper utensil, and (4) placed over the fire so that it would be cooked by the effect of the heat, and not by the effect of the flames.

"People kill the pigs?" exclaimed the Director of Forestation furiously. "People kill? The fire is the one to kill! Us kill? Never!"

The Director General of Roasting himself came to hear of this Commonsense proposal and sent for John. He asked what Commonsense had to say about the problem, and after hearing the Four Point idea he said:

"What you say is absolutely right--in theory; but it won't work in practice. It's impossible. What would we do with our anemotechnicians, for instance? Or the specialists in seeds, in timber? And the builders of seven-story pig pens, now equipped with new cleaning machines and automatic scenters?"

"I don't know," answered John.

"And what is to be done with those who specialize in organizing and directing our annual Conferences for the Reform and Improvement of The System? If your system solves everything, then what do we do with them?"

"I don't know."

"Can't you see that yours is not the solution we need? Don't you think that if everything is as simple as all that, then the problem would have been solved long before this by our specialists? Tell me, where are the authorities who support your suggestion? Who are the authors who say what you say? Do you think I can tell the engineers in the Anemotechnical Division that it is only a question of using embers without a flame? And what shall be done with the forests that are ready to be burned --forests of the right kind of trees needed to produce the right kind of fire, trees that have neither fruit nor leaves enough for shade so that they are good only for burning? What shall be done with them? Tell me!"

"I don't know."

"Tell me, you know the Chief Engineer of Pork Pyrotechnics, Mr. J. C. Well-known, don't you? Isn't he an extraordinary scientific personality?"

"Yes. He looks like it."

"Well, then, do you see that the plain fact of having such valuable and extraordinary engineers in pyrotechnics shows that the present System is good? And just what would I do with such valuable individuals if your system were adopted?"

"I don't know."

"Do you now see the problem in whole? What you must bring as a solution is a method to make better anemotechnicians. Explain to us how to solve the shortage of western fire starters, which is our chief difficulty right now (we have plenty of eastern, northern, and southern firemen); how to make pig sties eight stories high, or more, instead of the seven stories we now have. We have to improve what we have; we cannot change it. So bring me a plan that will show me how to design the crucial experiment which will yield a solution to the problem of Roast Reform. That is what we need. You are lacking in good judgment, Commonsense! Tell me, for example, what would I do with my good friend (and relative), the President of the Committee to Study the Integral Use of the Remnants of the Ex-Forests?"

"I'm really perplexed," said John.

"Well, now, since you know what the problem is, don't go around telling everybody you can fix everything. Now you realize the problem is serious and complicated, not as simple as you have supposed it to be. It's easy for an outsider to say, 'I can fix everything.' But you have to be inside to know the problems and the difficulties. Now, just between you and me, I advise you not to mention your idea to anyone--not to anyone, because it might bring about, er, ah, difficulties with your job! Not because of me, you understand! I tell you this for your own good, because I understand your plan. But, you know, you may come across another boss not so capable of understanding as I am. You know what that's like, don't you, eh?"

Poor John Commonsense didn't utter a word. Without so much as saying goodbye, stupefied with fright and puzzled by the barriers put in front of him, he went away and was never seen again. It was never known where he went. That is why it is often said that in those tasks of reforming and improving The System, Commonsense is missing.

Author Unknown

Editor's note: With apologies to Charles Lamb and thanks to Alberta Goodman for sharing this fable.

Karen Watkins, Editor

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSIONALS: WHAT ARE YOUR PREMISES?

The premises we use in planning and in viewing our future are basic. But who determines the premises used in our planning? Whose view of the future are we using? In the vernacular of the day, where are we coming from?

These premises questions bob up often in my mind when I see consultants offer "survival strategies" for our institutions. To me the word "survival" conjures up a picture of the mountain climber hanging on by his fingernails or the seaman gasping for breath as the waves wash into his open mouth. "Survival" suggests desperation, protecting what we have, wagons in a circle, Fort McHenry, "the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air." I want to go on record as saying that I am not part of the struggling seaman or the despairing mountain climber concepts. I am a proponent of the philosophy of the old Scotsman who prayed, "Lord, keep me alive as long as I live." The greatest threat to us is not from storms or cliffhanger episodes. It is in times of crises, war, catastrophe, and hardship that people so often have been at their best. In the face of danger and discomfort, they have risen to heroic stature and have achieved much. Rather, our greatest danger comes from routine, from following predictable patterns of activities, or keeping company with the same general circle of acquaintances and refusing to grow.

Thankfully, there is a group who believe their work is to encourage and facilitate learning, who are prepared to deal with problems and possibilities. The premises we operate from are these:

PREMISE ONE: We are committed to vitality rather than survival, to being creative, capable of taking initiative, lively, and hopeful. The truth is that for those in the community college field the prospects justify our point of view. A remarkable change is just beginning to take place in the outlook of those who project educational trends in this country. That familiar survival theme--"Managing for Decline," "Facing Decline," "Surviving the Eighties" is changing! The prestigious American Council on Education issued a news release April 16, 1980 to this effect:

> The long-projected large decline in college and university enrollments for the 1980's may not take place, according to the findings of an American Council on Education study announced today. Instead of an enrollment decline widely estimated as high as 25 percent in this decade, the new study calculates that there easily could be only a small decrease, a leveling, or even a slight increase (3 percent) in total enrollments over the decade, depending on the effectiveness of twelve possible enrollment strategies.

Some of us were not surprised. Four years ago, in an article published by the Change Magazine press, based upon my own observations of community colleges, I concluded: "The major problem we confront in postsecondary education is not decline in the interest in education and in the need for it, but institutional and public policy changes that are essential in order to serve mounting numbers of students in times of economic constraints--a condition that promises to be long-term."

PREMISE TWO: Our belief is that educational needs and interests will continue to grow. It is appropriate adaptation of educational institutions that requires our

efforts, not preoccupations with the spectre of decline. Someone viewing the prospects for postsecondary education in this country recently described community colleges as being in "the catbird seat." It was not a community college person who made that statement but one who saw that the directions of higher education's needs and interests were moving community colleges into an advantageous position. The time has come to acknowledge that as other nations and ours move toward a policy for lifelong education, the community college, because of what it has already become, is in the vanguard of leadership for education!

PREMISE THREE: Community colleges are in an advantageous position to make the necessary policy changes -- changes in form, and changes in citizen attitudes -- to meet emerging educational needs. There are two themes for education in the future that find community colleges at their promising intersection--community development and lifelong education. The broad diversity of learners in our institutions, the high proportion of part-time learners, the fact that students seem to come and go and come again, the interfusion of our institutions with all aspects of community life--these are all factors sometimes viewed as disadvantageous by college personnel and policy ma kers. They are, in fact, harbingers of what is likely to be the next major development in educational policy: lifelong education.

PREMISE FOUR: Community colleges can move beyond their established reputation as teaching institutions to a new and higher ground--TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE LEARNING. As I have quarreled mentally with the survival images of recent days, the common notion of "developing human resources" nags at me as well. The notion of our "developing human resources" could be a kind of intellectual colonialism, an implicit statement of, "We know what's good for you." Recently when I participated in a UNESCO symposium, I joined some thirty people, most of them from developing countries, who were sitting around a table at the University of Madras in Southern India talking about how adult education might reduce the inequities in our world. Some of those participants complained, "We find so much intellectual colonialism, so many people who know what's good for us, who say they will decide what to teach us!" To develop capacity in the individual to learn, we must fully fathom the sweeping changes required in institutional arrangements, faculty attitudes, and student expectations if "mathetics," the science of learning, is to be our style. The qualities sought are independence, self-reliance, and cooperation, not a condition of dependency upon an educational monopoly.

The community college is based upon the notion that people in the community can learn how to deal with their problems. They can take initiative. They can make decisions about their institution. We don't really develop people. They are not clay or marble to be fashioned by us. Hopefully we can participate in the learning process--we can be fellow learners. Large numbers of people who come to our institutions have had a good deal of experience with "colonialism." The most important outcome in their learning may be that moment when they can say, "We have done it ourselves!" That's the essence of learning.

On these four propositions, these premises for planning, for the moment I rest my case.

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For further information:

Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr. The Community College: Values, Vision, and Vitality. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1980.

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